



ふ-10-2



明日、ボクは死ぬ。
キミは生き返る。2

藤まる



電撃文庫

藤まる
illustration H2SO4

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ボクは死ぬ。
Tomorrow, I will die. You will revive.
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電撃文庫



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ふじ
藤まる

88年、山奥のとある一家で弟として誕生。姉が超チート性能を誇るので肩身が狭い。そんなわけかわいいう後輩が欲しいと思い、新キャラを二人も登場させたものの、またもや思っていたのと違う変な子ができてしまった模様。探究は続く。

【電撃文庫作品】

明日、ボクは死ぬ。キミは生き返る。 明日、ボクは死ぬ。キミは生き返る。2

イラスト：H₂SO₄

魚座。ゲームやライトノベルでイラストを描いています。
趣味は写真。時代劇やミステリ物が大好きです。
自己紹介には慣れないです。

あした明日、ボクは死ぬ。しキミは生き返る。いかえ2

ある事故で死んだはずの少女・夢前光^{ゆめさきひかり}の人格が、1日おきに俺の体に乗っ取るようになって約3ヶ月。超おバカ少女と二心同体生活が続ける俺は、彼女と唯一会話できる交換日記で衝撃の事実を知る！

『坂本くん！ い、妹ちゃんに彼氏が！』
なんだと？ しかし、なぜか妹は膝を抱えて半泣き状態。プンプンと実に不機嫌な様子……。う～ん、わからん。

そんな夏休みの朝、事件は起こる。いつもより5分早くやってきた2人の人格入れ替わりタイム——それは、夢前光が生き返ってられる時間が5分減っているという残酷な事実を意味していた……。

いつでも背中合わせな俺とあいつの、人格乗っ取られ青春コメディ第2弾！

藤まる

Fujimaru

illustration H₂SO₄



明日、
ボクは死ぬ。

Tomorrow, I will die. You will revive.

キミは
生き返る。



坂本秋月
サカモトアキユキ
「たのむから……
余計なこと
あるなよ……」

香寺美紗書
コウデラミサキ
「今日の美紗書は、
あなたの望んだ通りの
香寺美紗書ですか？」

真田霞
マナダカスミ
「坂本くんって
Mだったんだ。
ふふふ……」

夢前光
ユメザキヒカリ
「い、妹ちゃんに彼氏!?
ぐふふ、どんなイタズラ
しようかな〜」

坂本雪瑚
サカモトユキコ
「はいさんは、
雪瑚にどうして
ほしいのさ?」

夢前陽菜子
ユメザキヒナコ
「……………
さみしいなあ」

木下薫
キノシタカオル
「坂本さん♡」

CUT1
今日、俺は怒られる。
君は仕返す。 011

CUT2
昨日、妹は告白される。
なぜか俺が怒られる。 041

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君はヤクになっている。 087

CUT4
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俺はなかったことにする。 127



Tomorrow I will die.
You will revive.
CONTINUE

CUT5
今日、俺たちは花火を見上げる。
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俺はあきらめない。 291

ill revive.

Tomorrow, I will die. Y

ゆきいの コスプレ看病遊戯♡

Tomorrow

「診察してあげようよー！
心臓の音を聞くのですよー！」

「ガ、彼女がこんなに汗まみれで
にやにやトにやトにやトのよー！」

「どうしたらいいか
“患者様”？」



明日、ボクは死ぬ。ふりは生き返る。2

Tomorrow, I will die.
You will revive. 2

CUT1

今日、俺は怒られろ。
君は仕返ししろ。



CUT 1 – Today, I made you angry. You wanted revenge

“Brother, wake up.”

Hm? Morning already...?

“You can’t oversleep just because it’s summer vacation. Yukiko here is hungry.”

Ah...let me sleep a little more...

“Argh! Wake up now!”

Whoosh.

Ahh, my blanket...

“Now, wake up already...why are you sleeping naked, you perverted brother-!!!”

“WOOOAARRRGHHH!!”

I took an Ortega Hammer from my little sister, and immediately tumbled down from my head. I tried my best to widen my sleepy eyes, and saw the back of my sister covering her flushed red face as she ran out of the room.

“What was that about?”

I stand up to see myself reflected on the mirror, and let out a sigh.

Ahh, that girl.

“Even if it’s hot, at least wear some pajamas.”

I put on a jersey, and look at the notebook laid out on the table.

After seeing the diary that's littered with doodle, I can't help but let out another sigh again.

"Good morning, Sakamoto! Do your best for summer homework today too! I left a pile of it for your sake! Hikari really is great here!"

"You're just being the same as usual!

Hikari Yumesaki, you imbecile.

The girl's voice enter my mind, and for the 3rd time, I sigh at this usual unbelievable diary entry. At the same time, I recall the events of a certain day in early Spring.

It was a certain rainy day in early April, and a girl died unfortunately in front of me. It was Hikari Yumesaki.

I, who coincidentally was at the scene, was asked by a black-robed person "Will you use half your lifespan to save her?"

In the face of this sudden choice, I answered "Bring it on, bastard!". And so, I ended up using half my life as the price to get her to revive—

"...That was supposed to happen."

In fact, our personalities would save every alternate day, and we end up beginning an unbelievable life of two souls living the same life. I am in control of my body today, but Hikaru Yumesaki's consciousness will take over tomorrow. This occurs every alternate day, and thus, taking up half of my life. When I noticed it, I can't help but hate the sophisms in the Japanese language.

Every day, at 4.59am, our personalities will switch. We will not retain any memories when our personalities aren't present, and thus, I can only interact with the other me, Hikari Yumesaki, through this exchange diary method.

"Always doing such stupid things."

She would record the stupid things she did on the diary, and as this ridiculous diary entry has proved, this Hikari Yumesaki is an idiot at a level beyond other idiots.

And then there's the amazing death she had because she had a fujoshi fascination, but for some reason, whenever she did something in life, there would be all sorts of errors occurring, either that, or that she did some stupid things again. Thanks to that, my life's so frantic it's practically at a point of typhoon alerts. And because she's always doing such dumbfounding pranks, it's common for me to end up in troublesome matters.

"At least she did show signs of doing something."

I flip through the maths assignment, and found that she did do a few questions at least.

...Well, she gave up after doing about 3 questions or so, and then there's an increase in doodles, with a pretty spellcaster that resembles Hikari Yumesaki at the end.

**"Hikari's hard work is used as a sacrifice to summon Sakamoto!
I'll leave the rest to you!"**

And there's also this one vexing line on the illustration. All the questions after that were left blank. Damn it, drawing such a high quality drawing will take about the same time as a question!

"Please, I'll try my best tomorrow, so forgive me here. You'll definitely forgive me because you're so kind, right Sakamoto? I'll hate you if you're not. How about it. You're a covert handsome guy, Sakamoto."

"What's a covert handsome guy? You think I'll forgive you because of that?"

...I'll forgive you this time!

"Goodness. No exceptions next time!"

I lie my tired body on the chair's backrest, and continue to mutter to myself as I snark at the diary.

The wind coming from the window feels a little cooling. Ahh, today's rather hot too.

"Hikari Yumesaki, huh?"

I softly mutter the name of my partner.

Ever since the moment her soul resided in my body, a lot of things happened till this point.

I was once a guy who was ostracized by my classmates due to certain personal circumstances, but thanks to her, I inadvertently became the hero of the class, and I got a confession from a girl, something I never thought I would be able to have. Also, there was the confrontation against the guy called Kazeshiro due to the circumstances involving Hikari Yumesaki's death, and that was really dangerous.

I close the notebook, and place it on the cover she once touched.

The relationship between us is really inexplicable. We can't meet, can't hold hands, and can't talk to each other.

The only thing binding us tightly together is a notebook. She, with her back leaning against mine, is so close yet so far. I wonder how much has she occupied my mind? After the incident involving Kazeshiro, I too wanted to sort out my feelings a little...

"Well, whatever."

I force down the troubles that's bothering me in my heart, and decide to respond to her expectations. She's going to work hard starting tomorrow, so that means she wants me to work hard, I guess? Ah damn it, she's good at ordering others.

And so, I continue to live the life of two souls in one body on this day with Hikari Yumesaki. However, there's naturally no way the common life of the deplorable girl Hikari Yumesaki and this fake delinquent in me's going to go well. Naturally, this summer vacation is no exception, and we spend our days living quite the intriguing life.

Maybe a certain event that happened two days later will just be a prelude to something.

"I lost my memories."

"You spent a passionate night with your girlfriend until you lost your memories? Now this is why you're a delinquent."

"Listen to me seriously! I really lost my memories!"

"Also, why are you not calling me Miss? Now this is why you're a delinquent."

“Miss, please don’t joke around here. I’m serious. I really lost my memories.”

“Goodness me, why must you be born with such a terrifying face? Now this is—”

“Enough with this pattern already?”

“Hoho. I really do like this. Too bad, I guess.”

While my body’s gradually getting used to summer vacation.

The scorching sun incinerates the land as the sky remains cloudless. It’s now noon, so hot that I feel like exploding. Thanks to a certain person going bonkers, I had to come to school to take some remedials, and now I’m in the infirmary.

“And so? You lost your memories again?”

“That’s not all this time. Anyway, look at this.”

“Hm?”

I fish out a note from my pocket, and the infirmary teacher Higumo picks it up with her long fingers

She’s still wearing that trademark muffler, which could be written off if it was still spring, but it’s another thing in this season. It’s to a point where I want to ask her, “are you training?”. She ties her long black hair in a ponytail, and whenever she does that, the sights from the cleavage and miniskirt would attack my eyes. Those so happen to be exactly what I like

“...Huh?”

I look away from the complacent smile Higumo gives. Damn it, I can’t let me make a fool out of me.

"What exactly is going on? Can you tell this teacher?"

She waves the note as she asks me.

"...A-an acquaintance sent this message to me."

"Hm? A girl you know of?"

"Uu..."

"A girl gave you this little message?"

"..."

"Ohoho. No wonder you're showing such a face there."

She giggles as she stares at the note in amusement.

Shut up, damn it. You,

"I don't remember writing such a thing before, so, well—"

"Well?"

Do-don't make me say it.

"Wh-when exactly do girl write...such things?"

"Oho. This surely is youth. You're so cute despite that scary face of yours."

Ahh, whatever! I shouldn't have come after all! I'm going back!

"Wait wait! I'll hear you out. Sorry, I guess?"

Higumo tightly embraces me from behind just when I stood up, keeping me here.

Damn it. There's really an amazing smell coming from her hair. She hits all the marks for me.

“Then, you have no idea at all, Akitsuki? There may be some thing you did that may be trivial to you, but important to a girl, you know”

“Even if you say so.”

I can’t think of anything.”

“Hm, I see~I can think of this together with you, but...”

Higumo says such an annoying sounding line with a delighted look as she embraces me further, and whispers alluringly into my ear.

“I think maybe it is better for you to think, you know? Maybe that’s what she’s hoping?”

“...Uu.”

Tsu—she points her index finger at my cheek, and for some reason, it causes me to bashful.

“Can’t you try and recall what you did the previous day?”

She lets go of my body as she laughs, saying this. Though she did give me this advice,

“I’m troubled because I can’t do it.”

“Eh?”

“It’s nothing. I’m going back.”

After letting out this grumble, I’m really readying to leave. While on my way out, she says to me, “It’s hot out there. You should cut your hair.”, and so I reply to her, “You too. You’re wearing a muffler even though it’s so hot”, before returning back to the sizzling corridor. Do I have to walk back down this hot corridor?

“What I did yesterday...huh?”

I continue to walk slowly under the scorching sky.

I guess club activities are in progress, as there are some students dressed in uniform walking towards me while I’m walking home, and immediately shun me hastily.

As for why that’s the case, it’s because I have quite the heinous appearance. It’s already common for me to have people make way for me while I’m walking. Thanks to this, I don’t have any friends, let alone a girlfriend, and once remedials ended, nobody would ask me out to play, so I can only return home. Ahh seriously, I might as well just die.

“Ah.”

“Oh.”

The moment I entertain such thoughts.

Someone’s coming from in front of me, and my eyes stop on those bouncing braids.

“Ah, Sa-Sakamoto. What’s the matter? At such a time...”

“Hm, ah, I had remedials. I’m going home now. Are you attending club activities?”

“Ah, yes.”

Kasumi Sanada. Everyone in class calls are Kasumi.

This classmate of mine has the unique traits are her petite body, the braided her, and that she would stutter slightly.

The vibe she gives me is that she's an underclassman of mine due to her passive attitude, but their striking, self-emphasizing breasts tell me that she's of the same age as me. I can't take this anymore.

"I-is that so? You're going back...what do I do now. I don't have any club activities today...bu-but I want, to go out and play...with anyone who's free."

Heh? That's quite the slacking club life. It's good to have friends who can go out and play together.

"I-I'm thinking of going to the p-pool, so I bought an amazing s-swimsuit..."

Pool huh? I guess this is the perfect weather for going to the pool today.

"E-especially if it's you, S-Sakamoto—"

"Ah, I see."

I stare at a thoroughly blushing Kasumi, and suddenly remember.

It's a rare thing to be able to meet her. I guess a girl should be able to understand another girl's feelings best.

"More importantly, do you mind looking at this?"

"Eh? Ah, y-yes..."

Kasumi looks utterly devastated as she receives the note I hand her.

Hm? What's the matter?

"An acquaintance left this message for me, but I can't wrap my head around it. What does this mean actually?"

"M-message? Erm..."

And so, Kasumi stares at the message seriously.

“...”

Huh? What? Silence? Erm...

“...This is from a girl, right?”

“Eh? So what about that?”

“This is the message from the person you like...right?”

“Eh? Ah—”

The moment I say this, I realize what’s going on. D-damnnit.

Of course, I got careless. Regarding me, this girl...

“...I see. So this is the message from the girl you like...”

Kasumi’s serious eyes are staring at the note as she ponders over something.

Her face right now looks as if she’s plotting something instead of thinking of a solution.

“...What I think is that this girl you like definitely,”

D-definitely?

“This girl you like definitely hates you a lot, I think.”

“Ehhhh!?”

A lot!? A lot, you say!?

“The words are clearly showing her disgust and hatred for you. I’m a girl too, so I know this very well. It’s better for you to break up all ties with this girl, Sakamoto.”

“No, this is—”

“Trust me, Sakamoto. I’m saying this for your sake.”

“Th-this is...”

She’s saying these words with such fluidity she never showed before, and I’m left speechless by that.

Er-erm, Kasumi?

“Sakamoto, you shouldn’t be getting involved with me. But that means you’ll be lonely, right? I guess you’ll die without girls in your life...”

No, I won’t die like that...

“Th-that’s why, if you need to replace the girl...er-erm...”

Erm...

“I-I can replace her, if you like...?”

“Ah, erm...”

Such a response will only leave me troubled.

“If it’s you, Sakamoto...I don’t mind ‘being eaten up’ —”

“Ah, ahh! Time to go off now! Bye then!”

I can see a black color filling Kasumi’s eyes, and hurriedly cut the topic as I dash down the asphalt at full sprint. That was dangerous. Those eyes were basically staring at a prey...

And I continue to run until I could no longer see her, before I finally stop to wipe the dripping sweat from my forehead.

After doing so, I stare at the note again, muttering,

"A lot, huh?"

There's no way such a thing's possible.

"What's this?"

"A message I got from someone I consider a friend, a female friend. What do you think?"

"Brother, you have friends?"

"Don't retort back here!"

After returning home.

I gurgle down large gulps of malt tea to quench my throat, and visit my sister's room.

Of course, the reason is the aforementioned message.

"Hm..."

Feeling absolutely bored, I size up my little sister.

Yukiko Sakamoto, my little sister, a first year in Middle School.

Her hair's a straight, short bob, and like me, she has Sanpaku eyes. At this moment, she's staring at the note sullenly, making her face more sultry than usual. Maybe it's because the weather's too hot as she's dressed in a pink Camisole, exposing a lot of her body, and the miniskirt at the bottom's so short it's at the limit. Looks like she's beginning to gain the understanding of dressing up.

"What do you think? Since you're a novelist, you should be able to read what the author's thinking, right?"

"I don't have such an ability. This is different from Language classes.

Yukiko says so curtly without looking back at me.

Actually, Yukiko's already a novelist at this age, and even managed to publish a few volumes. She usually looks to be very busy, and as for what she's writing exactly...I do have some vague ideas, but I don't dare to confirm it.

"This is actually written to you; what exactly did you do to your friend?"

"I told you I don't know at all."

"Hm...maybe she's angry because of this?"

If that's the case, Higumo too did say something similar.

But even if they do say so, I don't know anything about what I don't know.

"Now then, Yukiko, let's assume this."

"Yes?"

"If I made you angry."

"That's quite often."

Enough with the retorts, please.

"And then, you left such a message for me."

"Ah?"

"And so, in other words, what do you think you want me to do."

"What do I want..."

This is called a change of thinking. If I can't think of the reason, I'll just think of how to settle it.

After hearing my idea, Yukiko lets out a murmur as she frowns harder than before. It's fine to have a sudden inspiration.

"What? She wants me to apologize after all, right?"

"...I don't think that's the case."

Eh? That's not it?"

"If it's Yukiko, e-erm..."

Erm?

"After a q-q-qua—"

Qua?

"Qua—rrel...or something..."

"Eh, what?"

I can't really hear her clearly, so I can't help but lean my face forward to ask.

Our noses are just inches from each other, and I can even hear her breathing. Once I bring my face to her lips, Yukiko's slightly red face exploded into beetroot instantly—

"Woah!? We're siblings, you know?"

"Eh?"

“Ah, no! It-it’s nothing! Y-y-you can think about it yourself! Yukiko has nothing to do with this!”

She yells out her thoughts as she turns her face away angrily.

“Wh-what’s going on? Why are you angry out of a sudden?”

“Shut up! You’re always garbage at such things all the time!”



Ehh...What was that...?

Goodness. You're the one writing such a weird blog, and now you're being so aloof to me. Have you got sick of me? Your brother's just a disposable thing?

"Uu...recently, there's only one so...ap...soap play...every two days . I-I feel lonely that there's so few times of it...what's with that service period back then...i-is it because Yukiko looked disgusted...th-that wasn't what I actually thought. That...uu..."

"Eh? What play?"

Did I do something again yesterday?

"It's nothing at all! Start making lunch now! Yukiko's hungry!"

Okay okay. Nothing happened, huh? I'm sorry then.

With Yukiko raging and demanding to eat, I can only rummage through the fridge for leftovers to make some lunch, and we proceed to eat without saying anything in particular. I then return to the room, dive into the bed, raise the note to the ceiling, and stare at it intently.

"... '**I'm angry**' — huh?"

I found this note sticking on my forehead the moment I woke up this morning.

There's no doubt about it. This is the message from the me yesterday.

I thought there would be an additional footnote on the notebook, only to find a blank. That girl's always having such major mood swings, prone to entire anger or mischief. It's often said that a girl's

heart is as tumultuous as the Autumn's weather, but she's never as gentle as the Autumn weather. It'll be better to describe her as having the temperament equivalent to Venus' atmosphere.

However, even if she does write such a thing to me suddenly, I can't think of anything. When I asked Kasumi and Yukiko, both of them too were stuttering.

She wants me to show concern for her...right?"

Well, if that's the case, you could have given me a hint.

And so, I add a line on the notebook "... (Give me a hint).", anyway, let's leave this issue aside for now. There's definitely something; maybe this is just a prank.

And so, two days later.

I open the notebook, and read the entry written inside.

"...(Hint: ChaCha Cha Cha Chaa Chaaaa~)"

"I don't understand what that is..."

Wait a sec. I'm being serious here. What is this? Eh, I really don't know.

However, she merely added on this line in the notebook. Well, it's impossible for me to understand this.

"Whatever, let's apologize first."

Feeling very impatient, I feel it's nothing much,

"I don't really understand, but sorry. I apologize."

I write this down in the notebook. She's someone with a lot of pride, and if she sees this apology from me, she'll probably feel a little better. It's just a small matter, and more importantly, you have to write your diary probably. That goes for two days ago too. I didn't know why I got sunburned because you didn't write the diary. I got scalded in the shower.

"She's always giving me trouble."

And so, I close the notebook and ignore this problem again. Surely this will be settled within the next two days, I think.

But I'm too naive.

Because Hikari Yumesaki's really terrifying.

"...(You're apologizing even though you don't know anything. How useless are you as a guy?)"

"Ah goodness! You're still angry!?"

Two days later, I quickly open the notebook, finding a chiding.

"Is this really alright!? You're apologizing even though you don't think you're in the wrong, and that's the one thing you shouldn't be doing, you know!? It's because of that...I won't say anything more now!"

What are you saying now!? I'm curious!

"Because of this, Hikari's affection of Sakamoto has fallen by 530,000 points! You virgin, humph!"

The diary entry ended here, and she even has a meter drawn with a color pen by the side, "Current affection for Sakamoto, -529,996

points". Wait, you only have 4 points of affection before this? Even though I worked so hard? I just want to end this useless quarrel. Why did it fall so much? Aren't you too reckless?

"Goodness, women are really a pain."

Ah, I feel like I just said the line of a winner in life. I should use this more often.

"Speaking of which, even I'm angry now."

That girl's not something who'll get angry so easily, right? I already apologized, so why's she still fuming at me. Hm, yes, I didn't do anything wrong.

"Do you think I'll know because of what you said? You call me virgin here and there, it's annoying. Aren't you a virgin yourself (LOL). Tell me the reason if you want me to apologize."

I think I may have gone overboard here.

In an instant, I thought of rewriting the thing, but I shake my head to remove my weakness.

No, this is fine. That Hikari Yumesaki has been getting a little too greedy nowadays. If I don't tell her that I'm scary when I'm angry, I don't know how much longer she's going to torment me.

"Right, it's decided. I'll definitely not apologize until Hikari Yumesaki apologizes."

I close the notebook violently, say some forceful words, and give a snort. What expression will the me tomorrow show? She'll definitely be breaking down in tears.

Haha, I'm looking forward to it.

“Ah, Akitsuki, why are you crying?”

“Save me. I did something wrong...”

Two days later, I arrive at the infirmary to cry at Higumo. The reason? Don’t ask me that. It’s definitely because of her.

If it’s about why I’m crying so much, I’ll have to go back to this morning.

It seems Hikari Yumesaki’s really angry. For some reason, I found a porn magazine beside my bed this morning, and I’m cuddling a Dutch wife. And then, I find a lot of some sticky fluids between my legs. Thanks to me, mom showed concern to me, saying, “Th-the weather’s fine today! Time to wash the bedsheets! We have to wash it once in a while!” And of all days, Yukiko just had to enter my room.

“Brother, I came to wake you up as what you told me yesterday. Hurry up and wake—WAAH!? B-b-brother!?” My sister’s words gave way to a shriek midway through. And during breakfast, she’s giggling away, muttering to herself, “Yukiko saw it ♥, it’s all sticky sticky ♥”

And on a side note,

“You’re just teasing me here, Sakamoto! I definitely won’t forgive you! I’m going to cast the eternal puberty spell on you! You’re going to wake up like this every single time! Prepare yourself!”

I’ll say that instead of it being the eternal spell, it’s an instant death spell. Are you that desperate for revenge?

“Good grief. I can’t do anything about it.”

Higumo says this as she raises her leg with a poker face. Damn it, now you're showing an unconcerned attitude. How am I supposed to face mom in the future, dammit!?

"You get it, Sakamoto? Girls want compensation."

"Compensation?"

"Yes, compensation."

Higumo slowly mutters those words.

"This isn't give and take at all. When girls do things for boys, they will always hope for something back. They hope the boys will do things that will make them happy, that the boy can give her a wonderful memory. Sakamoto, try giving a proper response to her."

"Even if you say so..."

I end up thinking that I'm the one who did all sorts of things for her. What did she do for me —

...

...Huh?

Wait, maybe —

"Oho, you thought of something?"

"...It's nothing."

Though I say so, I stand up from the seat.

Damn it. She's grinning away. I just thought of something urgent! Don't give me a look of 'so this is puberty' with that tongue sticking out! I'm angry!

"Bye then. I may come back."

"Sure, looking forward to it. Do your best, boy."

...I guess I better not come back after all.

I close the sliding door violently, and walk under the summer sky.

I see. So that's how it is. If my guess is correct—

I guess it's understandable why she's so angry.

Two days later.

I reach between my legs once I wake up...and there's none of the sticky stuff! Bingo! My guess is correct. Now this eternal spell's gone.

I flip through the notebook on the table, and the message left by the me yesterday enter my eyes.

"Seriously, why are you always so dull? I had to do this much just so that you'll notice, Sakamoto...I'm too lazy to say the rest."

"So what happened in the end?"

I let out a bitter smile as I look over at 'that thing' on the table. Two days ago, after my conversation with Higumo, I went to the department store to buy a gift, and wrote my name as the recipient, to be delivered on the next day.

"It came late."

Happy birthday, Hikari Yumesaki.

A bitter smile and relief appear on my face as I mutter this to the me yesterday.

It probably happened two months ago, and though it wasn't my birthday, I received a birthday gift from Hikari Yumesaki. She did prompt me to return one to me, but due to all the hijinks that occurred, I forgot all about it. Looks like this is the reason for Hikari Yumesaki's vengeance.

"Okay? I'll forgive you this time. You better pay attention next time! A girl really pays attention to events! The next time won't just be revenge alone. Remember this well."

"Yes yes, I will."

If she's to do something more outrageous next time, it may be serious enough to warrant a family meeting. I'll be mindful of that.

On a side note, the present I bought for Hikari Yumesaki's a pen tablet. It's a terminal used to draw illustrations on the computer, and I got a relatively good model amongst the available ones. This digital one's a lot more effective than drawing on paper, and since she likes to doodle so much, she'll be able to use this well. Leaving aside the fact that she normally draws those female erotic illustrations, she leaves them around in the room after she's done drawing, and I would end up interrogated by my mom's eyes the next morning when I wake up. I really hope that she'll leave me some mercy with regards to this.

On a side note, the diary content behind really make me realize that I really don't understand a girl's feelings, and what sort of significance a girl's virginity has.

"I don't mind having many boys going out with me as long as I like them! This Hikari here has 50 confessions at day when she's popular!"

She spent a few pages rambling about such things that clearly are lies. 50? Looks like the word virgin hurt her pride already. I guess I won't say that.

I don't know how Hikari Yumesaki felt just from the diary alone, so I switch on the computer to open my sister's blog, "Yukirin's big brother observation diary☆". It doesn't say much, but my sister's blog has all sorts of things related to me.

Let's check out the me yesterday.

"There was a package wrapped as a present, and when I look at it, I notice that it's from brother to brother. I really don't know what's going on. Brother even kissed the present once he got it, muttering 'I'll treasure it well'. It doesn't feel right. He even let out such a large amount of that sticky.....ahem!!"

"..."

...Hm, well, I guess Hikari Yumesaki's happy after all.

I pick up the pen tablet on the table and face it to the sun to see if there's a kiss mark, though it really looks like something a desperate guy will do, and after checking it, I continue to read the diary. Then, I see the very last paragraph.

"Ahaha, but you're the first one to give Hikari here something she wanted. As expected of you, partner! As thanks, I'll elevate you from virgin to super virgin! Good job☆!"

"And I'll still a virgin?"

And the way she says this makes me feel like it's a downgrade.

"Now then, please remember to reply. Good night~gguuu...ZZZ"

“Yes yes, good night.”

Though it's morning here.

After looking at the exchange diary that's oozing warmth, I feel that though I'm teased by her, her joy's reaching me through her words. Well, a lot of ruckus happened before this, but this has finally come to an end.

“I guess I should be doing my homework then.”

Compared to two days ago, there's only so little homework done today, but I still can't help but smile.

What shall I do starting noon? Speaking of which, I remember the afternoon drama she likes is airing this afternoon, if I'm not mistaken? She'll forget to record it beforehand anyway, so I'll do it for her. Ah, I remember the ice cream's finished. Guess I got no choice but to go out to buy it. She won't do it herself anyway.

“She's really a troublemaker.”

I grumble as I look out of the window.

The blue, tall sky is extremely clear, looking like it'll bring about some inexplicable encounter.

Such a wonderful summer sky cause me to let out a smile unwittingly.

Now then, summer vacation has just begun.

.....After thinking of how carefree I was, I can't help but punch myself.

For the summer vacation with Hikari Yumesaki, the tumultuous days, are just beginning.

And then, two days later, I found something.

“Sakamoto! News News! It’s a newsflash!”

“What’s with this usual ruckus of a diary entry?”

Grumbling, I continue to read on,

“Yukiko has a boyfriend!”

What the...

Tomorrow, I will die.
You will revive. 2

CUT2

昨日、妹は告白される。
なぜか俺が怒られる。



CUT 2 – Yesterday, my Little Sister Received A Confession, But How Did I Make Her Mad?

“Ugh...Why did this happen to me?”

As the months grew hotter, I was busy making lunch with tears in my eyes on a certain afternoon.

“That idiot booked the dentist appointment on one of my days.”

I feel that the girl, Hikari Yumesaki, is “the spoiled kid!”, only caring about herself.

It’s because of her eating sweets every day that I with cavities. I wrote in the notebook, “Take care of my teeth in the holidays!”, but that dimwit scheduled all of the dentist appointments on days when I had control. Right now, I’m seriously considering if I should reschedule my dental appointment.

“I told the dentist when I made the appointment, “I may look scary, but I’m really a coward! After today, no matter what I tell you, please don’t change any of the appointment dates! I will definitely muster up my courage and get all my cavities removed!”, so the dentist definitely won’t hold back here. It’s impossible to change the dates now.”

Now I don’t have a way out, damn it.

And so, I woke up early and went to the dentist to get my cavities removed. It still hurts so much that I’m sucking for air, and I’m really fed up with it.

“Sorry about that, Sakamoto. However, I scheduled for you to meet a really hot chick as your dentist, so you can just forgive me

already. Happy now? Happy now? Heheh, You're a boy after all, Sakamoto!"

On a side note, Hikari Yumesaki wrote that in the notebook.

Shut up already, you idiot. Looks like you asked during the scheduling, **"Please get me a dentist with big breasts!"**. and thanks to that, the dental staff were snickering at me. Even the dentist (with big breasts) told me, "You should hurry up and find a girlfriend, preferably one without cavities."

Anyhow, I added an additional rule in the notebook, "Rule 36: Remember to brush your teeth. Next time, I'll set the appointments!"

(Why is it that I still have to see the dentist when I'm already in high school...)

I let out a big sigh. I'm done, I've had enough!

But right now, there's something more important.

"..." "

Yukiko and I are having lunch together, and we're the only ones at home. We're having Yukiko's favorite for lunch: omelet fried rice, and everything fine till this point. However,

"...(Scowls)"

I get the feeling that Yukiko's really in a bad mood.

Well, actually, she's always scowling, and I can count how many times she actually showed a smile with my fingers. In fact, I wouldn't be able to remember her smiling if I didn't actually do a

Pokemon Drill Run into my mind. But even so, it's been awhile since I've seen her eyebrows scrunched so tight.

I can also tell how unhappy she is from the tone of her voice.

"Pass me the soy sauce (Hmph)."

"Turn down the TV (Hmph)."

"I'm full (Hmph)."

Although she would talk to me from time to time,, she would let out a "Hmph" and turn her face away whenever she was done speaking. Maybe she's trying to show me that she's angry, but honestly though, doing this only made her look really cute.

"Yukiko, is the omelet fried rice good?"

I cautiously tested the water.

"It's disgusting!"

And there's the response.

"Hmph..."

Once she said that, Yukiko left with glistening tears in her eyes. Whatever, the me yesterday probably did something stupid; goodness me.

"Just what did the me yesterday do?"

I returned to my room, opened my notebook, and proceeded to vent my frustrations.

It contained one of Hikari Yumesaki's messages I became so familiar with

"Yukiko got a boyfriend!"

“A boyfriend, huh.”

That was a shocking line I got the first thing in the morning!

Even I was exclaiming “WHHAAA!?” when I first saw this line , but after calming down and thought about it, I realized that it’s unlikely Yukiko could get a boyfriend.

I had expected a more detailed report to follow, but to my surprise, the rest of it was just “Aaaaaahhhhh!” , “Kyaaaaaaaahhh!” , “Waaaaaaaahhhhh!” and all kinds of exclamations. Seriously, can I punch that idiot at least once? Why are you so useless? You did this on purpose, right? This was on purpose, right? You blockhead, someone please punch the me tomorrow.

“I’m out of ideas. What should I do?”

I slammed the notebook closed, turned on my computer, and opened up a particular website.

The display shows a particular massive Social Networking Site. It’s the famous Twitter.

Recently, when I was searching through Hikari Yumesaki’s browsing history, I discovered that she had actually made a Twitter account to tweets. She would update her Twitter whenever she felt like it. I wanted to ask her for help, and I need to be a little subtle about this, but I think I may be able to get something. Using that as my excuse, I began to search through her Twitter feed.

Feeling lucky, I entered that idiot’s username “sexy dream” — —

“Ah, I did it!”

I saw the recent tweets from yesterday!

“Let’s see, what happened yesterday?”

There’ll probably be a clue somewhere —

“Sakamoto’s pudding is so delicious lololol”

“You bitch!!!”

I thought I finished it! Who could’ve known that you scarfed it!?

“He got some more ero-games filled with busty girls now.

Honestly, can’t he just get a girlfriend already?”

“I think I should change it to all the BL anime I recommend”

Stop...

“So bored. I want to pull a prank.”

“Brainwave!!”

“①Rummage through the floor for garbage

②Take some hair from it

③Take the hair to the bed

④Put it on the pillow★”

“DAMMMNNNN IIIITTTT!!!!”

Dammit, so that’s what happened! I was broken into tears this morning here!

Just you wait, I’ll get back at you!

“Ahaha!! LOL, Sakamoto will probably be in despair once he wakes up and sees the bangs that fell off. Winner!”

“It’s time for some soul-cleansing after all the ecchi things you involve yourself with!”

"I'm so bored, let's watch some anime."

"I need to at least watch some quality anime during this rare summer vacation..."

"Yahoo! Elementary school kids are the best!"

"Huh? A guest is looking for little sister? They're busy talking at the corridor."

Oh? Is this it?

"Eavesdropping! Start"

"Th-this is unbelievable! It's a really cute boy to boot! It's like a hot babe plus Sakamoto and minus Sakamoto level of pretty! This is amazing!!!"

"Huh? What's he giving?"

"That's...."

**"WOAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH —————
——!?"**

What happened? What, you went bonkers or something?

"Woaaahh! Kyaahhhh?! Kyah! Aaaaaahhhhhh?!"

"Little sister LOLOLOL, she LOLOLOL"

"Little sister — — — just received a 'love letter'!"

"LOVE LETTER!?"

Yukiko got a love letter!? For real!?

"Ah, the boy went home. Heh lol, little sister's face is all red."

“Hehehe. Little sister showed me the letter and said, ‘I’m totally interested even if you don’t approve, big brother!’ The way she said that was so cute!”

“.....Huh? I think I made her mad.”

Huh?

“Eh? What happened? I just said, ‘Have at it, I’ll totally support you two!’”

“Ehhhhhh? What did I do wrong?”

“Whatever! What’s important is to support the little sister’s relationship! You can do it!”

“Hmm...”

Hikari Yumesaki’s ramblings ended there.

After reading through tweets, I crossed my arms and started contemplating.

Having read through a summary of things, I got the feeling Hikari Yumesaki’s message about Yukiko getting a boyfriend is probably just her own opinion. I mean, Yukiko got a love letter, and there’s not much progress beyond that. The problem really confusing me however was — —

“Why is she mad at me?”

Was it something that wasn’t written?

“.....Let’s investigate a bit.”

Before Hikari Yumesaki does anything troublesome.

"Hey, Yukiko."

"....."

Knock knock.

I knocked on the door, and nudged it open. Yukiko's busy watching an afternoon drama in the air-conditioned room, and her response upon seeing me enter was to turn her head aside. Sigh, can you give it a rest already?

"Yukiko, it's about that love letter from yesterday."

"!"

Oh, I finally got a reaction.

"Can you let me see the letter?"

"...Why should I let you see it, brother?"

Her mouth said such words, yet she pointed her finger towards her desk. Over there was an aqua-blue envelope, with a cute letterhead in it.

"I'm gonna take a look."

I don't know why, but I was feeling nervous as I gingerly picked up the letter. A cutesy handwriting enter my sights, and my heart raced as I read the words.

"Let's see,

'Dear Sakamoto, I apologize for sending you such a letter so suddenly.

However, I can no longer contain my feelings, and so I decided to write this letter.

The truth is, from the moment I first laid my eyes on you, I have always liked you. I don't know whether this feeling is really love, but nevertheless, this is the first time I've ever felt this way I believe it's definitely a really special feeling.

Therefore, please be my friend, and I hope to understand this feeling slowly. You may take your time with it, but I do hope for your reply.

— — Kaoru Kinoshita'

...Huh?"

...Huh."

Once I read through this appropriately-long letter, I covered my searing face with both hands.

Yeah, this is love.

This is, without a doubt, a love letter. How do I put this... it feels too bittersweet, way too much of what a winner in life will get. What's wrong with me? I really want to cheer them on. Is it because I'm a man too?

"Is this 'Kinoshita' an acquaintance of yours?"

"...He's my classmate, although, I don't really know him that well since we didn't go to the same elementary school."

Sigh. Whatever. It doesn't matter if they're ready or not. However, the problem was — —

"Hmph...Idiot..."

Why is it that this little sister of mine is showing such a tragic look, hugging her knees and sulking away? Huh? Why? It's one thing if she's being shy, but why does she look so sad while pouting?

“...Are you really that happy?”

“Huh?”

“You even read the letter...is Yukiko here having a boyfriend really something that makes you that happy?”

.....Eh

“Hmph...you were as happy as an idiot yesterday...You don’t understand Yukiko’s feelings at all.....Idiot.....”

Erm, what’s this...?

“Brother...”

Yukiko had tears in her eyes as her voice lingered

“Brother...What do you want Yukiko to do?”

What do I want you to do? That’s a tough question you’re asking here.

Anyway, you’re probably trying to ask me how to handle this love letter. If so, I guess you should just go with what you want.

“Well anyway, it’s not a bad thing to try going out now, right? I mean, if it doesn’t work out, you just need to break up.”

I said in a very frivolous manner.

I had no romantic experiences myself, and yet I talked as if I knew what I was saying. It’s really surprising. But at this point, it looked like—

“.....Uggghh. ‘Anyway’...y-you’re saying that at this moment...!”

It looks like I hit Yukiko’s limit.

Ok, why do I have a bad feeling about this?

“Yukiko’s s-so furious...it-it’s too late for you to regret it...Yukiko has decided to settle this!”

“Huh? Settle this?”

What’s with the settle this?

“I will definitely, DEFINITELY make you regret it!”

Yukiko, with tears in her eyes, furiously pointed at me as she ushered an ultimatum. She then leapt at me and shoved me out of her room. Argh, what’s that about? I have a bad feeling about this.....

Two days later, I was suddenly stuck in my bed, extremely sick.

“Dammit...That no-brain good-for-nothing...! Achoo!”

38°C (100°F). No doubt that it’s a summer cold, and the reason was obvious. The me from yesterday caused this..

“Sakamoto, look at this photo! There was a downpour in the evening, so I went out to imitate ‘The Shawshank Redemption’! You know, just like in the poster! RED — — — —!”

You dolt, are you a frog!?

The notebook even included a picture, and the frame shot looked exactly like the scene from that famous movie. I clicked my tongue at the photo, and grumbled.

Furthermore, Hikari Yumesaki kept the AC on the entire day, slept with my belly exposed, and ate half a watermelon in one sitting...

thanks to that, I ended up with a cold. Dammit, the me today had to compensate for the debt accumulated by yesterday's me. What kind of twisted logic is this?

"I can't rely on the me tomorrow. Better find a way to get well today...."

While harboring this thought, I remained in my bed, recuperating.

At that moment, *knock knock* .

"I'm coming in."

".....Huh?"

Yukiko knocked on the door, and entered the room.

"I brought you some medicine and an ice pack."

"Oh, thanks—wh-what!?"

Huh? Eh? What? You? Wh-what are you doing!?

"What's wrong, 'Dear Patient'?"

"E-erm, why are you wearing a nurse outfit!?"

For some unknown reason, she's acting as a nurse, entering came in carrying a tray.

"It's perfectly normal for a nurse to come check on a sick patient. D-don't look at me like that."

"No, I would never look at you like..."

"Here's an ice pack, so just sit still already."

"Oh"

What a really ill-humored nurse...

Saying that, Yukiko stiffly handed me an ice pack.

...and casually brought her face closer to mine.

“O-once I get a boyfriend, if he gets sick, then I’ll wear this outfit while taking care of him.”

“Huh? Oh, ok.”

“Not only that, but I’ll also cast a magical healing ki-kiss.”

No, please don’t kiss a sick person now, you’ll get sick too.

“Y-you have to tell me now if you want me to stop. H-how about it?”

“Sigh...”

I’m sorry, can somebody please explain to me what exactly was my little sister saying?

Things will probably end badly if I don’t say anything in this situation..

“Grrrrr...! I even purposely chose the third most popular anime from Aniki’s secret collection to cos...”

Yukiko’s face began to darken.

“Arrgh whatever! You stupid patient!”

“Ow!”

She ruthlessly flung the ice pack at my forehead. That hurts!

“Wh-what are you so angry about!?”

“Shut up! You can just wait for your fever to subside!”

Her shoulders huffing furiously, “I’ll need Secret Weapon 2...!” that nurse stormed out of the room,

What is she going to do?

“Zzz...”

In the afternoon, just when I was feeling at ease, about to doze off.

“It’s time for some exercise!”

“Huh!?”

The door was slammed open, and I was hammered awake by a thud.

Entering the room at that time was...

“Cat...Cat ears?”

Yukiko was wearing some cat ears for some reason, and on top of that, a white school swimsuit. What’s going on now?

“Turn off the AC! You’ll feel better after working up a sweat and then sleeping!”

“No, Yukiko, I’ll be cured if I just sleep for a bit, so don’t bother me right— —”

“You’re too naïve! As someone sick, you need to be more active!”

It’s because I’m sick that I don’t want to move...

Thus, under the orders of the bossy kitty, I turned off the air conditioner, and proceeded to do sit-ups in my room. Why am I working up a sweat while running a fever?

I repeated this motion for 15 minutes.

“Huff...wheeze... Let, let me wipe off your sweat for you. T-Take off your clothes...”

Yukiko was also sweating profusely, and she panted heavily as she up my shirt.

“Wa-wait”

“What’s wrong?”

“Don’t get so close to me.”

You’ll catch the flu too.

“H-Hmph, anyway, It’s perfectly normal to have skin contact when I’m wiping sweat off. O-Once I get a boyfriend, I’ll also get this close to him when I wipe off his sweat.”

Again about the boyfriend. Just what are you trying to do?

I’ll ignore it for now. Thanks to Yukiko getting me to exercise, I started to feel a lot better. Heheh, bet I would feel much better if I were to nap.

“Thanks, Yukiko. I feel better now. It looks like you would make a good wife.”

I tried praising her, but...

“.....Tsk.”

What? I think I just heard her click her tongue —

“I’M NEVER GOING TO BE A WIFE!”

“Abebu!?”

Yukiko shouted, and then angrily swung the towel at me — Wait a second, what are you doing!?

“I don’t care about you anymore! You can just get back your salt from your sweat!”

The young girl wearing cat ears stormed out of the room, her mouth whispering, “Now that it’s come to this, I’ll have to use my Super Duper Best Cos...”

That night.

Aaahhhh, I’m finally feeling better. This is good; if this continues, after a good night’s sleep, I’ll definitely be —

“Brother! I’m here to check on you!”

“Please, I’ve had enough! What is it this time!?”

Yukiko began her third entrance, and this time, the outfit was...

“...Yukiko, what are you doing?”

The naked apron. Yukiko undoubtedly felt embarrassed wearing such a revealing outfit, moving in a distinctly coy manner.

“I’m here to check on you! I need to inspect your heartbeat! Pull up your shirt!

“There’s no need, I’m perfectly fine now...”

“Hurry up!”

Uh...

Left with no choice, I reluctantly pulled up my shirt, and then Yukiko proceeded to place her ear right on my chest. Wait a second, is this girl for real?

"I'm fine now. I just need a little more rest"

Well, that was what I had planned

"Ok..."

Yes, now then—

"Yukiko wants a diagnosis too."

"What!?"

Yukiko pulled her apron as high as she could, her face beetroot as she looked away. I couldn't help but quietly retort:

Alright, I've had enough! Just what have you been trying to do since morning!?

"I-I'm practicing some afternoon family drama skit fo-for when I get a boyfriend! If you don't like me doing these kind of things, then you have to tell me to stop, right now!"

"Yukiko... what's wrong with you...?"

I kind of asked that question in an exasperated tone. After being pushed around all day, I was extremely exhausted. Yukiko probably noticed something from my expression, and she stood up with a displeased look before she proceeded to walk out of the room with a teary look.

"Why didn't it work...? Do I need big breasts after all... Sobs..."

And she said those words as she left.

“.....”

That day, I woke up on the floor in my room.

For some reason, the lower half of my body was naked.

I surveyed my surroundings; It looks like Hikari Yumesaki went on a rampage, since the room was a total warzone from how I last saw it.

“Oweoiwnvklcxoifeiwonadkalsdjslah”

And meanwhile, there was an incomprehensible dying message written on the floor.

“What did she do this time?”

I opened the notebook, and the first line entered my eyes..

“My balls hurt...”

“A girl shouldn’t be using such a vulgar word...”

What’s with that out of a sudden?

“Why? I was only trying to look through Sakamoto’s secret anime collection, and then tell little sister which postures would please her boyfriend best ... Why did she kick me so hard right there...?”

It looks like another event occurred. On the other hand, why are you always looking through my secret collection? It’s not a secret anymore, is it?

“It hurts... it still stings even when I massaged it in the bath... It looks swollen...”

Stop touching there. It’s embarrassing.

“Sakamoto will have to stay a virgin forever. Well, it was always this small and flaccid...”

I’m gonna cry!

“It’s no use, it really hurts. I should probably rub on some medicine. Some Mopiko should do...” (T/N: A brand of anti-itch cream)

“...Eh?”

H-hey, wait...

“I’m sorry Sakamoto. I put the Mopiko cream on your desk. If you wake up and it still hurts, you should probably rub some on.”

W-Wait a second, d-does that mean...

“Now I can finally go to sleep. Without further ado, good night~”

S-stop–

The entry ended there. Once again, I took a look around the wrecked room, and then settled my gaze on the last testament left behind. Sigh... Just this once, I can sympathize with her.

“What an idiot.”

Having said that, I began to worry about the area between my thighs, and I dashed out of my room.

That was careless of me.

“Woah!?”

“Ah!”

I nearly bumped into someone, and I stumbled.

“W-Watch out!”

“Ow!”

The next thing I knew, I was embracing the person I almost knocked over. Huh? Is this delicate figure Yukiko’s? Her shoulder is pretty wide—

“Oh, uh, good morning...”

“Huh?”

I looked down, and realized that there’s a beautiful, young girl in my clutches.

Her ears were hidden under her short black hair, and her exquisitely pretty face, decorated with two large eyes, was flushed red.

“Kaoru! What are you doing!? Brother, you too!”

“Ah, Yuki-Yukiko”

At that moment, Yukiko poked her head out of her room and lashed out at us. Huh? Kaoru? I feel like I’ve heard of that name...

...

“You, you’re the Kaoru Kinoshita who wrote that letter!”

“Eh—!? Oh, uh....”

Oops, I messed up. I shouldn’t have mentioned that.

I quietly whispered an apology to the flushed Kinoshita. I’m sorry.

“We-well anyway, I heard you’re a boy?”

“Y-Yes...Kaoru Kinoshita. Please take care of me...”

Again, I size up the girl...no, the boy before me.

His petite frame was just a little bigger than Yukiko's. The black short hair was actually quite long for a guy. But what really captivated me was that beautiful youthful face.

Is that really a guy? Oh dear.

"Way too cute..."

"Huh!? Uh-um...!"

Don't give me that now. But really, what was I saying? He's a guy, and it's rude to say that.

I cleared my throat, let go of his body, and re-inspected him.

"So, erm, did you come over to play?"

"Y-Yes. Because Yukiko invited me to visit—"

It's finally the day that Yukiko actually brought her boyfriend home! Well, it's understandable. It's no wonder that Yukiko's heart would waver after receiving a love letter from such a beautiful guy.

What's more, this kid isn't shivering after seeing my face. That's a rare one. Is he actually holding it in because he thinks that being scared of me is disrespectful? If that's true, then he's a really nice person.

"Oh, well, you've been taking care of Yukiko for me. I'm her brother, Akitsuki. Please take care of me."

"O-Of course! Please take care of me! It should be me being cared for!"

Kinoshita hurriedly bowed his head to return the greeting. Hoho, he has proper etiquettes too. Not bad.

"I-I've heard about you from Yukiko. She said that you're a very kind, cool, reliable older brother. At school, she's always bragging —"

"Sh-Sh-Sh-Shut up! Don't say anymore!"

Yukiko stomped over with fury, and interrupted Kinoshita with a shout.

"I- I'm sorry, Yukiko. B-But, it does look like you're right. Your brother does look really reliable...really..."

"Eh? I-is that so?"

I couldn't help but let out a smile after receiving a rare compliment.

W-well, this kid's not bad. Yukiko, how about marrying this guy?

"B-brother, Yukiko will be with Kaoru in her room!"

"Huh? Oh, ok."

What's this about?

"A-And we'll do tons of inappropriate things!"

Inappropriate things?

"Yu-Yu-Yukiko, wh-what are you saying?"

"You're annoying, shut up already, brother! Starting from now, Yukiko's going to do things in her room that she doesn't want other people to see! Yukiko will open the door slightly because it's going to be hot, but you mustn't peek! I-If you do, we're officially estranged! Do you hear me!?"

“Eh, ah, okay.”

“Yu-Yukiko...!”

Yukiko dragged Kinoshita while the latter flailed his arms in protest, looking back at every single step. Well, if you don't want anyone to see, then just shut the door. Plus, you already told me not to look, so I won't.

Moments later.

Yukiko spent the entire afternoon with Kinoshita. But, for some reason, she would occasionally run to the front of my room and yell,

“A-ahh~! It's so hot, why don't we be in our underwear only~!”

“K-Kaoru, yours is so big, so different from big brother! It's so big! Look, it's about to erect! Now's the only time to stop it!”

She was yelling stuff like that. I ignored all her words that they were confusing me. She then sobbed and gave me a kick for some reason later on. What was that about...?

Later, at sunset,

“Brother, are you sleeping?”

“.....No response.”

“Then he's probably asleep.”

“.....Heheh” (gulps)

“Hey, don't sleep in your room with your belly exposed while the AC is on! D-Don't be mistaken, it'll be troublesome for Yukiko here if you get sick again, so Yukiko is here to warm you up for a while!”

"Yukiko felt lonely, but it's definitely not because you didn't bother stopping Yukiko from getting a boyfriend...and stuff..."

"Brother, you belong only to Yukiko..."

Squirms

"Just for a while...this blanket is a hinderance right when he's asleep..."

"It's so warm... brother's scent..."

"Ah, I can feel his breath from here... It smells so sweet...."

"Just for a while.....Just for a while....."

"Zzzz—"

.....

.....

.....

I quickly opened my eyes.

"Sigh."

I originally planned to fake a nap until dinner time, but I got up. I had intended to pretend to be asleep because I thought that it'll be too much of a hassle to deal with Yukiko, but I never expected things to take a turn for the unexpected.

"Could it be that—"

No, truthfully, I already had this feeling right from the beginning.

"Yukiko wants me to stop her from getting a boyfriend?"

Well, that's probably it. It's like when a stubborn dad would angrily yell, "My daughter doesn't need a person like you!" when their daughter brings home a boyfriend. Yukiko probably wanted such a scene, and she chose me to play the dad role here.

"I see. That's how Hikari Yumesaki made her angry."

Of course, it was just a hunch.

For me, the idea of the older brother interfering with his little sister when she receives a love letter was just absurd. If the guy she brought home was completely unreliable, then of course I would do my best to stop him. But if it's Kinoshita...then I guess there's no problem.

"Don't sleep with your stomach exposed."

I pulled the blanket over the sleeping Yukiko beside me. Still drooling while you sleep... Sigh, it's even dripping onto the bedsheets. Whatever, at least she's my little sister.

"Now then, what should I do?"

I muttered as I tenderly stroke Yukiko's head. I had absolutely no idea what I should do.

That night, the biggest surprise attack thus far was pulled on me

"Hahhh~..."

I was taking a bath.

Since it was really hot, I initially decided to just take a shower, but as soon as I laid in the bathtub, I found it exceptionally comfortable, and so I slowly began to relax in the nice warm bath—

"Brother, how's the bath?"

“Hmm? Oh, wait a sec, I’m almost — —”

Yukiko’s question could be heard from the dressing room, and I hurriedly gave my response. Why did she ask me now — — *Creak* — — Nonono!!!? (T/N: In most Asian households, the bath and shower are separated from the sink/dressing room which are right beside them, kind of like the bathroom for most master bedrooms.)

“Waitwaitwaitwaitwait!? Wh-why are you coming in!?”

“Yu-Yukiko wants to take a bath too! If You can just get out if you don’t like it, brother!”

Although the mist from the bath was quite thick, I could tell from the atmosphere that Yukiko’s face was probably blushing furiously when she answered so quickly and shrilly. This was way too reckless of you.

And so, through the mist, Yukiko’s snow-white skin was bared right in front of me. Even though her body was exposed, Yukiko was brazenly...wearing a bikini.



Whew, that scared me for a second. No, don't get me wrong, but —
“You really went through the effort to choose that bikini...”

“Th-this was meant for my boyfriend to see. D-Don't look at me with those perverted eyes!”

I'm not.

Yukiko suddenly assaulted the bathroom, and the swimsuit she was wearing was a two piece set, revealed lots of skin, and really was one that grabbed a lot of attention. The fluffy tulle skirt completely emphasizes her cuteness. She really chose a good one there.

Yukiko entered the bathtub directly, and we sat with our backs were facing each other. Wait, speaking of which, I don't mind that you're wearing a swimsuit, but I'm naked here. Doesn't this mean that I can't move now?

“.....brother?”

“What is it?”

“...Do you still remember that time when Yukiko was being bullied?”

“Huh? Why are you bringing this up now?”

That incident still remains fresh in my memories.

It's an exaggeration to say that she was bullied, but she was often teased by some naughty punks when she was younger. She has always been small, and doesn't like to smile even though she's a girl, but back then, she was also really weak.

“Yukiko was always spaced out, always being bullied...But you came to save me at that moment, brother, and even carried me home. To Yukiko, brother is a hero.”

“I’m not that amazing.”

On a side note, why is it that I have a deep impression on this incident? That’s because I had walked over to them with a smile, trying to settle this amicably, but for some reason, the bullies yelled “Woah, who’s that guy!? He’s terrifying! We’re gonna die!” That gang of brats, at least 5 of them, then scampered away wailing. It’s really a bittersweet heroic tale, and the reason why I had my back facing Yukiko was because I didn’t want to let her see me so heartbroken. It’s not too much of a stretch to say that it was that moment when I was terrified of smiling. That was the start of my trauma...woah, stop stop stop! I’m about to cry again!

But there was another reason why this had a deep impression on me

“.....When I had just entered middle school—”

“Hmm?”

While remembering all of the trauma quietly, Yukiko shifted her weight away from my back, and whispered,

“When I first entered middle school, people made fun of me for writing light novels in class.”

“Huh?”

“The fact that I became a light novelist was never known...but those annoying girls in class were mocking me for doing that. They say that writing novels really fit my pessimistic personality.”

“Ah, there was such a thing?”

What’s going on? You got to be kidding me. What’s so funny about that? Aren’t you amazing for being a novelist at such an age? You’re in middle school, you know?”

“But at that time, Kaoru protected me. After I got home, he even sent an encouraging letter to me. He may look that way, but he’s a rather courageous guy, and has a strong sense of justice. He’s really like you in that sense, brother.”

Yukiko didn’t look back as she kept leaning her back on me; I wasn’t able to read her expression.

She continued,

“...Kaoru’s a nice guy, decent at studies, and though he’s a little bad at sports, he’s still courageous, kind, an-and...”

Yukiko then swallowed what she said. At that moment, I got the feeling that she’s crying, or that’s probably just me.

“Brother.”

“Hm?”

“I’ve already noticed what’s going on. I’m no longer at the age where I daydream anymore.”

“Daydream?”

She finally turned her head, and her face —

“.....Can Yukiko really have a boyfriend?”

“.....”

It was an unprecedented, stern, anguished sidelong face she showed, and I had the impression that she somehow matured little by little in this passage of time, showing traces of frailty and charm of a young girl.

.....A boyfriend, huh?

“.....I believe that the most important thing is to be with person you love. It doesn't matter how this love came to be, nor does it matter if other people accept it or not... you should stay true to your own feelings.”

I had a vague answer as to what Yukiko was hoping for when she said those words, but that was all I could only say. I too experienced a love that would never blossomed. Stop giving me that grieving look there.

“.....I understand. I'll think about it for another day.”

Yukiko's turned her face away as she answered..

After that, she did not say anything extraordinary. She showed no signs of getting up from the bathtub for such a long time, and I suffered from a rush of blood into my head.

Once I was done, I patted my burning head and cheeks with my hands, recalling the matured sidelong expression Yukiko showed back then.

.....It's definitely only because of that rush of blood, ok?

“Yukiko...Yukiko looks like she's suffering today...Like she would cry if she watched the sunset...”

“Yukiko...”

Two days later, I read through the entry Hikari Yumesaki wrote, and that image appeared in my mind. Surely Yukiko’s feeling troubled. It’s the first time she received a love letter, and fell in love. That petite body’s going through such great pain, with that stinging—

“Yukiko...I couldn’t help but make a picture of the troubled Yukiko my phone wallpaper...”

Yukiko.....

“Yukiko.....Yukiko.....Lick...Lick...”

Yuki.....

“Oops, I was licking Yukiko’s picture, and I got seen by aunty there. Great save!”

“What did you do!!?”

Like hell it’s a save!! That’s way out of the ballpark!! No wonder my mom wouldn’t greet me at breakfast, you idiot!

Hikari Yumesaki finished by writing: **“Since Sakamoto is a delinquent, everything should be fine.”** Once I had finished reading, I couldn’t help but let out a heavy sigh, and slammed the notebook shut. Ah whatever, she can do whatever she wants. I don’t want to get involved with such an idiot.

“I guess it’s about time to head out.”

I changed my clothes, headed towards the front door, and saw someone there waiting for me.

“.....You’re too slow.”

Hikari Yumesaki had bought a snazzy dress for her, saying “It’s for your boyfriend”. It’s a casual white one-piece dress, and gave her the appearance of a princess.

“Let’s go.”

“.....Yeah.”

Yukiko got on the back of the bike, and we headed towards the middle school.

A few moments back, Yukiko sent a message to Kinoshita, “I hope that you can head to the pool in our middle school”. Now, why did I end up being her chauffeur? That’s because she asked me to come along. I thought that I would be disturbing them if I was present, so I refused, but after she fawned and begged, I tagged along. I guess I’ll listen to that level of stubbornness from her. Kinoshita will probably forgive me.

I continued to pedal forward like a plane passing through the expanses of a cloudless sky. I guess the difference from the sky however is that one is booming and the other is silent.

With a warm sensation on my back, I continued pedaling for another 15 minutes or so, and we finally reached the nostalgic main entrance of the middle school. It was only a few years back that I had attended this school myself. I rode the bike past the entrance, stopped, and locked it up. I then walked side by side with Yukiko to the back end of the swimming pool, and to follow Yukiko’s pace, I slowed myself down.

“Ah.....”

Sweat dripped down her forehead, and it’s probably not simply because she had been out under the sun for so long. He — Kinoshita

was standing under a cool shadow, his cheeks showing a scarlet red.

“H-Hello, big brother Sakamoto.”

“Sup. I’m sorry for tagging along.”

“Huh.....?”

I apologized out of the guilt I was feeling. To my surprise, Kinoshita looked more somber than before. Ah yes, that expression’s basically saying, Now is not the time to discuss this. That is the case, since what comes next....is to hear the answer from the person who received the confession.

“.....Kaoru.”

“Y-Yes?”

Upon hearing Yukiko speak up, Kinoshita hurriedly straightened himself.

“S-Since I’m going to give you my response...I wanted to hear you say it out again...”

“Huh...Uh...”

Kinoshita blushed as he turned towards us, and after letting out a teeny-weeny voice, he again lowered his head. Hey...Yukiko’s going to ask him to confess again...and in front of me?

“O-okay...I understand.”

However, Kinoshita didn’t show any fear. He lifted his head confidently, his fists clenched firmly,

"I have always, always liked you.....From the moment I first saw you."

The confession began.

Yukiko silently glanced at me.

Just what did she want to do? I had no way of knowing for sure, but after seeing her being so persistent in wanting me to come, I think I have a slight guess of it. However.

"I first met you by accident, when you siblings were walking on the street side by side... At that time, I knew that you were my type."

What exactly was Yukiko feeling at this point? What sort of emotions did she have standing here, and what was she thinking before she arrived?

"Erm, well, it'll make you angry...but I stalked you afterwards...you were scowling, but you were the first to give up your seat in the train, and even showed a cute smile like an animal. You spoke to the kids, and that dejected, teary look of yours was really cute when you scared them away...after that, I started to realize my feelings for you. That's when I wrote that letter."

To Yukiko, or anyone else, receiving a confession is an ordeal with no clear answer.

"Later on, when I was invited to your house just a while back... as I expected, your appearance, and your inner character are very beautiful. You're someone who's willing to accept me... And so, I confirmed my feelings."

Well, Yukiko, you're no longer a kid. Your brother can't always be protecting you here. That's why you should come up with your

own answer. Don't worry. No matter what answer you choose, Kinoshita will definitely accept it.

"So—"

So—

"Please go out...w-with—"

Yukiko—

"PLEASE GO OUT WITH ME! BIG BROTHER!"

Come up with your own answer!

.....

.....

.....

"Huh?"

While the cicadas chirped, us siblings blurted out our confusion in unison.

".....!"

Kinoshita's face was completely red, his eyes tightly shut as he reached his hand towards me.

.....

...Towards, me.

".....Kaoru."

Yukiko's cold voice rang out.

"Y-Yes...?"

Kinoshita's cute voice trembled in response.

"You gave Yukiko that love letter.."

"Right, thank you Yukiko, for helping me pass that letter to bro."

"Huh? P-Pass on?"

"Huh? Didn't I already tell you? I said it was a 'request for bro'."

".....Yeah, it was a 'request for bro, to acknowledge our relationship' right?"

"Huh?"

Kaoru's cute little face showed a skeptical look.

Huh?

".....K-Kaoru, you said that you first met me on the street that day."

"Mhm... I saw you walking besides Yukiko, brother Akitsuki and...f-fell in love on first sight."

Huh?

"Kaoru...you know brother's a guy right?"

"Mhm...no problem. Since I'm a guy too..."

"Huh?"

"Huh?"

Huh?

"Kaoru...you know brother's a guy right?"

Yukiko asked again.

You don't have to give the same answer twice!

“ .. ”

Surprisingly, the person who broke this silence was neither me, nor was it Kinoshita.

“IT’S FINALLY HERE —————
—————!!!!”

“K-Kaoru!! You’re that type of guy!? Huh!? Huh!?”

Where did that melancholic girl just now disappear to!?

“Oh...about this”

What's wrong? K-Kinoshita? Why do I feel like there's a weird look in your eyes? They're swirling around, and so hollow like a deep, empty void—

“Bi-big brother Sakamoto looks really scary right? He's really tall, has a sharp look in his eyes, and looks like an intimidating wolf. However, even though no matter how I look at it, he's just a pitifully timid person and his whole body gives off the feeling of a virgin who wants to tightly hold a girl's hand with all of his strength, which is what really attracted me in the first place since I really wanted to tease this kind of person and I felt that if I get to trample on his emotions then I would be able to satisfy my sadistic tendencies and once I thought of this I just couldn't sit still and so I decided to confess to him, which is why I've also already made my decision that if I didn't receive a satisfying answer here then I would put a collar around bro's neck and forcefully take him and so Yukiko, please make sure to join me in my effort.”

“OKAYOKAYOKAYOKAYOKAY! Yukiko! I'll leave the rest to you! I, I just remembered that I had some other things to take care of!”

I loudly cut off Kinoshita's curse. The scorching sun was visibly beating down from the empty sky, but my body was breaking out into cold sweat. I wasted no time to wipe off my sweat as I hastily turned around. Danger, Danger, Danger, Danger. This situation was too dangerous. Never would I have expected this development. I was careless, way too careless. Yep, I messed up big time. My days of youth were over, just like that idiot girl who also screwed around—

Grab— —!

“Eeks— —!”

Two hands grabbed my shoulders from behind.

One of them belonged to my beloved little sister.

The other one belonged to —

“Big brother, why are you running away? Didn’t you tell me before?”

“Uh, w-what...?”

The pupils in his eyes lost all luster.

The sun appeared to be covered up by the moon, and I felt the same mysterious, tingling sensation from a solar eclipse that —

“You told me before, that—I’m really cute.”

“Oh.....”

...No, even though I did say that, it was actually just a.....

“Brother, just accept it already. You also said this before, that the most important thing is to be with the person you love, and that it doesn’t matter how this love came to be, nor does it matter if other people accept it or not...that you should stay true to your own feelings. I believe that Kaoru is also just being honest with his feelings.”

No, but— —

“Bro, from now on, I’ll call you brother, heheheh~”

But— —

"Brother, stop denying it, just accept it already."

— —

"Brother" "Brother"

Crack crack, the two middle schoolers' slender hands gripped my shoulders.

I fixed my gaze on their two hands, and thought.

— — Hikari Yumesaki, please take over for me.....

"IT'S HERE———!!"

"Dammit....."

I firmly believed that I would be ridiculed by Hikari Yumesaki, so I chose not to write about that event in the notebook. However, it was quickly exposed; it was probably Yukiko who told her...

"That development was so unexpected! Congratulations Sakamoto! I'm so happy for you! So this was the reason why you refused Kasumi's confession! It looks like you were that type of guy after all! Congratulations on dropping your virgin status!"

"Don't you think that this involves you too...?"

I took a glance at my cellphone, and looked at the wallpaper, a photo of me and Kinoshita, being way too close to each other, staring into each other's eyes (The expression in Kinoshita's eyes was very dangerous, his eyes swirling around). That moron...went as far as to use someone else's body and taking such a picture.

"Thank you for the food. Hmhm~ ♪"

On the other hand.

After Yukiko happily finished the omelet fried rice I made, she clasped her hands together and said thanks. Dammit. You were so pissed just two days ago. You really are a finicky person. Your mouth is covered with ketchup you know.

“Dinners made by you are really delicious, brother. The best.”

Oh, thanks.

“Brother.”

“Hm?”

I dejectedly lifted up my spoon to scrape up some of the omelet fried rice covered in ketchup, and I boorishly grunted. Yukiko’s tilted face looked nothing like it was two days ago before, entirely devoid of that painful expression, but it still had that mature flair to it. She put her index finger on her lips, and said:

“I’ve decided that I don’t want a boyfriend for now.”

“Huh?”

And then—it’s been a truly—truly long time since I’ve seen it—

“Yukiko feels that she is the happiest as she is right now.”

It was really nostalgic, engraved into my mind, but a far reminiscence.

I've seen it before when I saved Yukiko from that group of bullied.
It was a fleeting, but definitely unforgettable, distant memory.

That was probably a precious gem that only an older brother could see.

The little sister's bright smile shined under the summer sun,
glimmering with radiance.

Tomorrow, I will die.
You will revive. 2

CUT3

今日、俺は旅に出る。
君はヤケになっている。



CUT 3 – Today I Went On a Vacation, but You Threw a Tantrum

It happened suddenly.

“Huh?”

When I woke up, I saw that I was in my dimly-lit room, sitting in front of my computer.

My right hand's holding the mouse, a tissue in my left hand, and a smiling, pretty 2D girl was displayed on the computer screen right in front of me. A soothing BGM could be heard from the earbuds I'm wearing. Sigh, I get it, it's happening again.

It looks like Hikari Yumesaki's using the summer break to pull all-nighters to conquer a galgame. The color of the sky outside and the sudden sluggish feeling that surged in me explained the situation. While she was immersed in her game, 4:59 AM arrived, and I took over.

I glanced at the tissue in my left hand, and realized that there's snot and tear dripping down my face, so I gathered that she was probably playing a tragic galge. Seriously though, I clearly wrote a rule to go to sleep at 4:59 AM. Every time that idiot gets really into something, she starts making really stupid decisions.

I wiped off my snot, grabbed my cellphone to turn off the alarm, and was about to sleep for a bit when—

.....Huh?

“4...54?”

I stared at the screen...No, no, no, it can't be.

“.....How.....?”

On that day in early August, 4:54 AM.

An unexpected problem has intruded into our chaotic mutual life.

“You’ve got to be kidding me...”

This cruel reality dawned along with the five minutes reduction of Hikari Yumesaki’s time.

“Hmm? My time is decreased by five minutes? Really~? Are you sure? Oh you~ This is probably just one of your hasty conclusions, Sakamoto☆ You’re still going to have that terrifying look on your face today anyways!”

Two days later, I opened the notebook, saw the entry, and bit my lip.

“What’s going on?”

Two days before, a mysterious phenomenon suddenly appeared.

The time I switched over with Hikari Yumesaki changed from 4:59am to 4:54am, five minutes earlier. I thought it was weird, so I immediately gave Kazeshiro a call, informing him of the situation. Kazeshiro was Hikari Yumesaki’s friend when she was still alive, and the only one who knew about our personality swap. He’s a relatively calm and rational handsome guy, but he’s also an idiot who fell in love with Hikari Yumesaki.

Last morning, I woke up thanks to the alarm I set at 4:30, and while I was feeling terrified, I remained on the phone with Kazeshiro as I waited for the switch to occur. The result was—

But I'll leave that aside for now. Kazeshiro and I discussed this inexplicable occurrence for a while, and we agreed on a plan that on the next morning, I'll call Kazeshiro while waiting for 4:54 to arrive. If the time Hikari Yumesaki switched with me was in fact earlier than 4:59, then it just meant that the time when we switch over was simply brought forward. However, if the time when Hikari Yumesaki switches with me didn't change.....

Last morning, I woke up thanks to the alarm I set at 4:30. Carrying dread, I stayed on the phone with Kazeshiro as I waited for that moment when the switch occurred. And the result was—

“The switching time is still 4:59. Are you sure you weren't just tired and mistaken, Sakamoto?”

“So it didn't...change.”

The time when Hikari Yumesaki switches with me remains at 4:59am.

Even though Hikari Yumesaki's entry looked optimistic, this wasn't really the case, especially since this meant that—

“Kazeshiro, what do you think?”

I held my cellphone in one hand, and gave Kazeshiro a call. I asked him tentatively, and the response was—

“.....Although I don't want to think too much about this, it looks like Hikari's time has been shortened.”

So it was true.

The conclusion Kazeshiro and I arrived upon was, assuming it wasn't a simple matter of us getting the times wrong, that we were dealing with a serious problem. That is, Hikari Yumesaki's time has

been decreased by five minutes, and in turn my time has been increased by five minutes.

"Sakamoto, how shall we explain it to Hikari?"

"There's nothing really to hide, so let me talk to her first. If the me tomorrow gives you a call, then you can clarify it for her."<

"Ok. However, it could just be what Hikari said, that we simply messed up the time. Anyways, we should call each other every day before 5 o'clock for this week. That way we can investigate it further."

"Alright, sorry about that."

As expected of the guy who was willing to give up his life for Hikari Yumesaki; I couldn't decide whether if it was his self-sacrificing spirit or if it was his activeness at work here. He really likes Hikari Yumesaki, and it's really admirable.

I ended the call, and put my elbows onto the table as I let out a deep sigh.

Dammit, didn't that black-robed bastard clearly said it was half of my life? What's going on now?

"Really? Did Hikari really lose five minutes? You're joking right~ You knew Hikari's been wasting her time lying in bed, so now you're just purposely trying to push her around! Well I won't fall for it! Hmph!"

"Sigh....."

Two days later, this reply was written in the notebook.

I wrote a comprehensive explanation on the situation two days ago. I was wondering what her response would be once I suddenly dropped this matter on her. Looking at how it stands, although she was startled, she doesn't seem to have fully grasped the seriousness of this incident. There's even a cute illustration of an angry Hikari Yumesaki on the diary.

"Even if it's true, it's just a 'bug', right? Don't think too hard about it. No problem, no problem☆"

"Sigh..."

Maybe it really was as Hikari Yumesaki said. This whole occurrence could never be explained scientifically in the first place, so maybe what was happening right now was like an error. Even though I reassured myself with those words, I switched with Hikari Yumesaki at 4:54am.

"Maybe there really is no problem."

Feeling unsettled, I was at my wits' end. This day quickly went by.

".....We switched at 54 again. Doesn't this look really bad?"

".....It does look pretty bad."

Two days later, I opened the notebook, and mumbled to myself upon seeing those words. This situation isn't exactly bad for myself since my time was increased. However, Hikari Yumesaki's time was decreased. This was quite a problem. While her time's reduced by five minutes for now, what if the time is reduced by ten minutes, or even fifteen minutes —

"This is bad... I'm scared that I might just die. I'm sorry Sakamoto, I couldn't help but to give in to my impulses and recklessly buy so much anime merchandise... and bolsters..."

"Spending to ward off your anxieties..."

With the words in the journal conveying such obvious unease, Hikari Yumesaki had no way of concealing her anxiety. Kazeshiro's email from yesterday were as such.

"It's alright. It's only five minutes."

"I'll find a way."

All of his emails were encouraging. Hikari Yumesaki was feeling so down, Kazeshiro could not help but send her these kinds of emails to assure her.

"What should I do..."

".....(I don't wanna get out of bed, I just wanna sleep)."

"It's no use. She's really feeling down now..."

Two days later, this was all that Hikari Yumesaki wrote in the journal. The page even included a small sketch of Hikari Yumesaki lying gloomily in bed. Dammit. Even though I can't tell if she's seriously depressed or just joking around, she's probably trying to express her lack of motivation in her own way. It's really hard to understand her true feelings.

"Kazeshiro, how are things on your end?"

"Not good. Honestly, I can't find anything."

A numb, feeble voice came out from the phone speaker.

Kazeshiro and I were currently searching for solutions, but we didn't have a clue as to how to investigate this unbelievable incident. We looked up all kinds of urban legends on the internet and went around town to find that black-robed stranger. But in the end it was all fruitless. No wonder Kazeshiro is all worn-out.

"Guess I'll try searching in the library today. That way, I can leaf through every book to see if there's a clue. Give me a week, and I can probably go through every book in the library."

"Sure, can you do it?"

Wouldn't you need an entire year?

"What are you saying? Hikari is in serious danger right now. Nothing is impossible for me."

Amazing. As expected from the guy who's willing give everything for Hikari Yumesaki. Unrequited love is seriously amazing.

I ended the call, and prepared to head out. I intended to look for that black-robed guy once again.

But once again, I couldn't find a clue.

Two days later, Hikari Yumesaki finally fell apart.

"Yaaaaaaaahoooooooooooo! Delicious — — —! Spicy food is the best!"

"Kazeshiro! The me yesterday went crazy again!"

She's screwing around during this serious situation!

In contrast to my unsettled self, a weeping voice came out of the phone.

“Sakamoto... Hikari said she can’t handle it anymore...Sob...”

“What happened yesterday!?”

“She suddenly called and yelled ‘I don’t want to live anymore, I just wanna die already — !’ She’s already lost herself... Sob sob, so pitiful...”

Kazeshiro why didn’t you retort her with “But you are already dead”?

“Basically, she was just yelling out some random things all the time, and I didn’t really understand most of it. Like ‘But this season has way too many anime!’, ‘But all the new works I’m looking forward to are going to be on sale!’, ‘I really want to make out with cute little kids~~~~Dammit!’ and stuff like that.”

Sigh, no matter what happens, that girl will always be that comical, although I think she’s actually taking this quite seriously.

“Is there anything else?”

“I don’t know. After she ended the call, I tried my best to call her again. Sometimes she would pick up, but sometimes she would not... Once when she picked up, I heard her shout, ‘Singing karaoke by myself is the best — !’, and then she started enthusiastically singing some really old, heart-wrenching songs. She’s already given up on herself... Dammit... Can’t I do anything for her...”

Not good, Kazeshiro has reached his limit.

“Kazeshiro, I’ll call you back, you should wipe off your tears first.”

Sigh, I've had enough. I have absolutely no idea what should I do about this.

"Adam Adam Adam Adam Adam! I wanna see Adam! I really wanna pet his soft, cuddly body!"

It looks like she has gone crazy.

Hikari Yumesaki told me before that Adam was the cat she was raising at home. It seems that moron really loves her cat, and Adam's name would show up in the notebook infrequently. Although I really wish she would tell me why she would choose this name.

"She's really throwing a tantrum now."

Written back in the journal was this incredibly short explanation.

"Important newsflash! With nothing to lose, Hikari has decided to cast off her image as a pure and innocent heroine!"

"Pure and innocent, you?"

A pure and innocent heroine who uses vulgar words like "virgin" and slang would be a fraud right?

"What should I do... Dammit..."

Having just woken up, I'm getting all kinds of weird thoughts, I just want to vent out all of my frustration and anxiety. Why am I feeling down right now? Not good!

"I should go wash my face first."

I decided to set this issue aside, and closed the notebook to keep my emotions in check.

However, as I said before, I was merely delaying the issue for the time being.

I would later to realize that I had to deal with it properly.

“Huh?”

This morning, my cellphone suddenly received a message. I shot a glance, and saw that it was—

“Kinoshita...”

That boy’s so beautiful I thought he was born the wrong sex. His message made me swallow my drool with disgust. Dammit, it’s all Yukiko’s fault for carelessly telling him my phone number and email address, and he’s been constantly calling me and texting me often. But I have to pick up. If I don’t answer, I’ll be subjected to a flurry of calls throughout the entire day.

“Sigh... Hello...?”

“Ah, good morning, b-bro.”

From the other side of the phone came a cute voice that no one would ever expect came from a middle school boy. Had he been a girl, then I would have definitely been giddy with joy. Now then, why did he call this time?

“I-Is it convenient now?”

“Yeah, now’s fine. What’s up?”

“I saw the email bro sent yesterday... and I was really happy.”

Huh? Email?

"Bro finally has that same kind of feeling towards me, and that makes me so happy. It's alright, after a few more simulations at you, you'll definitely be able to satisfy me."

"Eh? Ah? Huh?"

Simulation?

"Bro... Hehe~...I'm looking forward to it...Hehe..."

"!!? Hey wait, what..."

Just when I was about to ask, "What are you talking about?"

"Ah"

Another phone call came. The caller was—Kasumi?

"Ah, sorry, Kinoshita, please hold for a second. Something suddenly came up; I'll talk to you later."

"S-Something? Something you have to do huh... hehe."

What the, how did it come to this!?

Kinoshita's voice is giving off an ominous vibe that's leaving me chilled with goosebumps, so I hurriedly ended the call and answered Kasumi. What happened, why's she calling so early?

"Hello?"

"Sakamoto, is now an okay time? You're not busy are you? Well?"

"Ah, now's fine. No problem. What's up?"

I felt that she's being a little bit more assertive than before.

"I want to ask about that email you sent last night."

“Email?”

Now that I think about it, Kinoshita also mentioned something like that.

“You did send it to me last night, right?”

“H-Hold on! Give me a second!”

I quickly opened up my email on my cellphone. Ok, so just what did I do yesterday huh?

I opened up my sent mail folder with dread. It’s probably another one of those weird...

“Right now, my heart yearns only for you. I want to hold you tightly in my arms, and let our passions run wild.”

“.....HIKARI YUMESAKI YOU’VE DONE IT NOW!”

Another troublesome email! In fact, this email was sent not only to Kinoshita and Kasumi, but also to more than 30 girls, including all of the girls in my class! Even Yukiko got one!

“Hello?”

“Oh, sorry about that. About that, uh, email...”

How should I go about this?

“Sakamoto, I’m really happy. I never knew you felt this way about me. If you want to hold me in your arms...that means you want to do those kind of things right?”

“No, that’s...”

"And you even feel so passionate about it. It looks like you really are an M, hehehe~..."

What with that profoundly meaningful giggle...?

"However, Sakamoto, did you know?"

"Huh? What?"

"If you send an email to multiple people on your phone, then the people receiving it can also see who else you sent the email to, you know."

Oh, so the email addresses will be included, so—

"So then, Sakamoto, when I saw the email that Sakamoto sent —"

Oh...

"—I also saw a list of all of the other email addresses that were included. You're amazing, Sakamoto, to send such an erotic email to 30 girls at once."

"Aaaaahhhhhhhhh— — — — —!!"

Oh sh—!

"Don't worry, I'm not mad at all, nope, nope, not at all."

No, if you talk to me with that cold voice...

"Although I haven't investigated it, the girl you like is on this list. If I'm to look through them...one by one, then maybe..."

WAIT, WAIT! STOP! STOP! CAN YOU CALM DOWN FOR A SECOND!?

While I was having this thought, another phone call came...Oh, it's my classmates... Not only that, but there was a knock on the door,

which was accompanied by Yukiko's lonely voice asking, "Brother, are you awake? Yukiko can't sleep, she doesn't feel so well..."

AAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH, I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!

"SPARE ME ALREADY.....!!"

I glance at the notebook lying opened on the table, and saw the words at the bottom:

"Before I die, I'm going to establish my own harem kingdom!"

The sound of the phone ringing, Kasumi's constant "Hello? Hello?", and my little sister's lonely "I'm prepared now..." entrapped me from all sides. I helplessly raise my head towards the ceiling, and thought to my heart:

Sigh, maybe I should just hang myself...

"Thank you for the food!"

After an entire morning of incoming calls, I finally managed to appease all of the girls that were interrogating, and I was fatigued as lunchtime approached.

As mom was out, I had no choice but to put on the apron, and prepare lunch for Yukiko and me.

However, there was something that bothered me...

"Brother, what's wrong? Hurry up and eat."

"Oh, okay."

Yukiko was sitting beside me. In front of me was a table that could seat four, and normally, she would be sitting opposite me.

You're probably thinking that this doesn't matter. But then how do you explain this? There's only two of us eating lunch, but we're not sitting face to face; instead we're eating side by side. Don't you find it strange? Am I thinking too much into this? Also,

"What's wrong?"

"N-Nothing."

".....(glances)"

It was clear that Yukiko was stealing some glances at me. What do you want now?

After lunch, Yukiko continued to act suspiciously. Basically, she sat beside me, glancing at me with a solemn look from time to time. When I moved to the sofa, she proceeded to sit beside me, and her sidelong face showed signs of excitement. Whenever I moved, she would basically cling to me. Seeing as how she was quietly looking at me, it's obvious that she had something to say. However, I couldn't read her thoughts at all. During dinner, she even stuck a piece of rice on her face, and it was really uncomfortable since no matter how I looked at it, it was definitely on purpose.

And then, when it was almost time to go to sleep.

"Big brother, I want you to clean my ears for me!"

"Huh? Why?"

"Don't ask why, just do it!"

Yukiko forcefully put an ear swab into my hand. Why do I have to clean her ear?

I'm sitting on the sofa, and Yukiko's lying down on her side, resting her head on my lap. She's wearing a cute, summer-style pajamas, and the moist hair let off a nice, sweet scent. Of course, since she wanted me to clean her ears, she's tilting her face towards me the entire time. Why are you doing this?

"Does it itch anywhere?"

".....Yes."

"Where?"

".....My cheek."

.....You can scratch that place by yourself.

That's not what I mean. I'm talking if it itches inside your ear

"Alright, Yukiko, time for the other ear."

Yukiko turned around, and now she had positioned herself with her face facing my stomach. Then she turned her cheek towards me again. What's wrong? Do you really want to show me the side of your face that badly?

However, not knowing what I was supposed to do, I simply continued my task of cleaning out her ears. I end it off by blowing into her ears lightly, and my job was done. Erm, this is enough right?

".....Grr"

Well, she seems annoyed here.

Yukiko's blushing furiously, and a scornful look very similar to mine slowly appeared on her face.

"Uh, so... Yukiko, why don't you help me by cleaning out my ears—"

"You can clean it yourself! Yukiko is such an idiot for expecting anything from you!"

Slam—!

With those words, she ran back to her room and locked herself in. What happened this time?

Left in a daze, I suddenly remembered, "Oh right, there might be something updated on the blog.", and so I quickly returned to my own room, switched on the computer, and entered the website. And then—

"Stupid big brother, yesterday he was saying, 'If I can't have Adam, then I'll just have to eat up Yukiko! Let's go with rubbing Yukiko's cheeks!' and then he even touched my cheeks. But he didn't notice Yukirin today... So lonely, so sad. It looks like yukirin will need to take the initiative... No, I can't..."

"That idiot..."

So this is what you meant by casting off your appearance of a "pure and innocent" heroine.

"Although, big brother's cold demeanor was also really cool ☆"

Upon seeing that line, I immediately closed the blog without a second thought. Then I opened the notebook, and groaned. Sigh, enough already, she's drumming up more trouble than I can handle.

"In any case, I need to wait for her to cool down."

If this continues, I don't even want to think about the kind of misfortunes that will happen to me. However, how much of my reassurance will she listen to? Ugh, what will tomorrow's me be doing when I wake up again?

"Sigh..."

Two days later, I let out a sigh as I stared at the notebook.

"Hmph, you got a problem? Hikari's precious life time is five minutes shorter! Why don't you just let Hikari do what she wants! Hikari is just a pitiful child!"

Two days ago, I wrote, "I understand that you're upset, but calm down a bit. Right now, Kazeshiro and I are looking for a method to resolve this", but that was her reply. She also wrote, "Since I'm stuck in this mess, surely you can understand if I let loose a little right~? If you're still hung up about this, Sakamoto, then the noble image of you in my heart will be shred to pieces you know~".

It looks like Hikari Yumesaki was not only capitalizing on the trouble she made, but also using the fact that her time was cut short by five minutes to do whatever she wanted. She really doesn't feel uneasy at all, does she?

"Changing the subject, Hikari wants to learn how to swim before she dies! To play in the water with cute girls and hot guys!"

She continues on. Ah, that's fine, that isn't a bad idea. Considering Hikari Yumesaki's level of idiocy, this is still acceptable. However, the problem came next.

"That's why, I used Yukiko's vacation tickets and booked a three days, two nights tour for sea bathing! If you cancel the reservation now, you'll have to pay the full cancellation fee, so you have to go! It said up to three people can go, so you better start inviting some people now!"

"Sigh, enough already...you want to go on a trip using this body..."

I remember I had obtained a ticket for a three days, two nights tour from Yukiko, and it looks like the me yesterday made her reservation. But since this body would switch personalities every day, it would've been best to avoid traveling with other people.

"Sigh, am I out of ideas?"

I can bring two other people along. One of them is definitely going to be Kazeshiro, but as for the other one, maybe Yukiko? Though for now, I need to check the dates first. Which day are we heading out? Today was Monday so—

"You can check in on Monday at 2pm!"

.....

"Isn't that todaaayyyyy!?"

Idiot! Dumbass! Retard! Tell me beforehand if you're going to book a reservation! And now you're telling me 'here's a three days, two nights trip right now☆'!? That's too stupid of you!

"Dammit, guess I'll start by getting Kazeshiro on board..."

And then I'll ask Yukiko too—Oh wait, I can't. She said she is doing an interview for her light novel, and was out since yesterday. Sigh, great...I have few friends to begin with.

"Guess I have no choice."

I reluctantly took out my cellphone and made a call.

"Hello?"

"Ah, hello, is this Kasumi?"

The one I called was Kasumi. Although I felt that taking a maiden along with two guys on a trip was a little inappropriate, I really couldn't think of anyone else to bring, so I had no choice but to call up Kasumi. Furthermore, since it was an overnight stay, even though it's my body, I wouldn't be comfortable with having Hikari Yumesaki sleep next to some other random guy.

"I need to ask you something, is that okay?"

"O-Ok. What is it?"

"Um, I'm real sorry about this but..."

"Mhm?"

"Can you go on a three days, two nights stay at a beach resort with me right now?"

"Eh————"

...Uh, hello? Why wasn't she responding?

"...Together with Sakamoto...overnight stay...at a beach resort..."

"Yeah. I guess a request like this was impossible for you. I'm so —"

"I'll go."

“—sorry for, wait, you’ll go!?”

Her birsk response made me unconsciously raise my voice. Are you serious?

“What should I bring?”

“Oh, let me think (she’s pumped up...). Since it’s the beach, a swimsuit probably? And especially...”

“A swimsuit? Got it. I’ll prepare a sure-kill swimsuit, so don’t worry about it.”

KILL!?

“Now then, just send me an email on the time and meeting place. Oh, and also—”

“Hm?”

“Leave the night preparations to me. I’ll bring everything along. Okay, I’m going to prepare now.”

N-night preparations...?

What does she mean when she says “night preparations”? Oh, poker cards and stuff?

“Then I’ll leave that to you. Sorry, for dropping this on you so suddenly.”

I ended the call, and heaved a sigh of relief. Everything’s going well. Erm, all that’s left is Kazeshiro. He shouldn’t be a problem. Besides, like me, he doesn’t have a lot of friends in the first place.

I sent him an email saying, “Hikari Yumesaki wants to go sightseeing, get over here right now.” Then, I hurriedly began my

own preparations for the trip. Seriously though, if we leave now, then it'll be sunset by the time we get there. She really loves to give me a trouble.

Because of all that pestering she caused, I got ready and met up with Kasumi and Kazeshiro at the train station. We went west on the Shinkansen, and then transferred to a local train, before we finally spotted a beautiful seaside and arrived at the resort. It was evening; there was no way we could head to the beach, so we split into genders and soaked in the outdoor hot springs. After dinner, we leisurely wandered around until now. Ah, I'm so tired. This sudden vacation really was exhausting.

On a side note, even though Kazeshiro said, "This is so like Hikari", and had a face of resignation as he accepted the abrupt invitation, Kasumi was looking really, really peeved.

As soon as she saw both Kazeshiro and me at the meeting place, the smile on her face immediately fell off, and she began to continuously grumble under her breath. She could talk with Kazeshiro naturally, but why couldn't she even say at least a few words to me? I also thought that she had prepared some poker cards, but it turns out that she didn't, so we just sat side by side watching TV, chatting away. I guess it doesn't matter, since I liked lazing around anyways.

Later that night, something happened.

"Guess it's time to go to sleep."

Suggested Kazeshiro—and he was right, it was pretty late—and so we began to gather our things in one of the two rooms we had reserved. Afterwards, I was going to follow Kazeshiro into the room next door when—

"Well then, I'm going to the other room. Good night, Sakamoto, Sanada."

".....Waitwaitwaitwait!"

What are you saying!?

"Kazeshiro!? Hey, wait a sec! Wait a sec!"

"What is it, Sakamoto?"

"Why am I sharing a room with Kasumi! Logically speaking, I should be with you!"

Kazeshiro had his hand on the door knob, but I grabbed his shoulder and protested. I mean, look at Kasumi and how panicked she is...wait, she's not? W-Why is she clenching her fist and giving a victory pose? Why is she giving Kazeshiro a thumbs up? Huh? Why?

"Sakamoto, calm down and think for a moment."

Once he had finished talking, Kazeshiro beckoned me towards him with a dumbfounded look, and took me out into the corridor.

"Listen closely Sakamoto. At 4:59, you're going to switch with Hikari. That's fine until this point."

"Mhm."

"So what I'm saying is, if I'm going to be sleeping with you in the same room, when I wake up tomorrow I'll be seeing Hikari's sleeping face."

"Yeah, so?"

"Sakamoto..."

Hm?

"Once I see Hikari's sleeping face, I might be overwhelmed with the desire to attack her."

"....."

— — Huh?

"It's probably going to happen. It may be your body, but it's still Hikari inside. With her sleeping face next to me, I probably won't hold back into this."

"...Kazeshiro, think about this carefully. N-No matter what, this body is still male."

"I don't mind."

Well I do!

What is this guy saying with such a serious look on his face... Just how much do you love Hikari Yumesaki?

"But, Kazeshiro, wouldn't this make Kasumi feel awkward?"

"Sanada? She and Hikari are both girls, so she should be fine even if she sees Hikari's sleeping face."

"No she wouldn't! She doesn't know that Hikari Yumesaki shares this body with me! Spending the night together with me will probably cause all sorts of problems right!?"

Huh...Kazeshiro held his chin, and pondered for a moment.

"You sure are a picky person, Sakamoto. Why don't you just sleep by yourself then?"

“Wouldn’t that mean you and Kasumi would have to sleep together...?”

“I don’t have any sentiments for a girl other than Hikari.”

D-Damn. You’ve got some guts to be able to say that. Even after seeing Kasumi wearing her bathrobe so loosely after a bath, you can still proclaim such words in the face of her seductive appearance...

In the end, after some more discussion, we still ended up with me sleeping with Kazeshiro.

“We clearly aren’t even engaged, and yet we caused Hikari to do such a reckless thing. I guess I’ll go for a walk at 4:30.” Kazeshiro was blushing to his ears as he softly whispered to himself — Are you really unable to help yourself? I silently let out a retort as I laid down, and just in case, I pulled my futon away from Kazeshiro’s as far as I could...

However, for the entire night I was too scared to fall asleep, and it was only at dawn, when I realized that Kazeshiro had gone out for a walk, that I was finally able to relax as I waited until it was 4:59.

Was that guy serious when he said that...?

“Sakamoto...it’s really comfortable here. Come on, slowly come over here...”

“H-Hold on. I need to prepare myself.”

Gulp

Kasumi stared at my naked body, and swallowed her drool.

She had let down her usual braid, and her beautiful long hair was so wet that it clung to her snow-white skin. The water droplets clung onto her skin, which showed just how soft and delicate it was.

“Yo-your body looks really good, Sakamoto.”

“Huh? Oh, uh, is that so?”

“Mhm... Usually, you’re wearing clothes, and I couldn’t see... so I didn’t know...”

“W-Well similarly, Kasumi is also...”

Even though I knew your skin looked really amazing, seeing it exposed made it appear very tantalizing...

“Hehehe, anyways, we should start now. Sakamoto...”

“Okay, I’m starting now.”

And with those words, I began to slowly work my way towards her.

She was a little bit shy and had her head down, her face completely red.

What kind of expectations did she have for what we were about to do, to show that kind of expression—

“Sakamoto, don’t be scared. Don’t worry, you can do it.”

“Ok, then—”

I went towards her— —and felt something slimy.

Wait, slimy?

“AAAAAaaahhhhhhhhhhh!? WHAT IS THIS!?”

“What’s wrong!? Oh, Sakamoto, that’s a jellyfish—”

Splash.

Having felt something so unexpected, I reflexively moved my feet away, and fell into the deep waters where Kasumi was. Ugh, so salty. I accidentally drank some seawater.

“S-Sakamoto, are you okay? Here, grab my hand!”

“Oh, thanks.”

Two days later, on the third day of our stay, the three of us went to the beach.

Under the dazzling summer sun, I held onto Kasumi’s small hand, the heat from her palm causing my heart to race.

“Is everything okay Sakamoto? Since you can’t swim, make sure you don’t play around like yesterday. If you feel like you’re drowning, then just grab onto me. I-It’s okay for you to touch any part of my body that you want...”

“Got it...”

I couldn’t help but blush uncontrollably after hearing those alluring words. On a side note, I already know how to swim, but the reason Kasumi believed otherwise was because yesterday, Hikari Yumesaki acted like a fish out of water in the sea. As a result, Kasumi was easily convinced that I didn’t know how to swim, which is why she would let me hold onto her hand. Call it cheap tactics if you want, since I was clearly taking advantage of it.

“What’s wrong Sakamoto?”

“N-Nothing...”



Kasumi used her hands to fix her messy, but still beautiful hair, and I stood facing her, not knowing where to focus my gaze upon.

I-I mean, even if I disregarded the lush tone of her skin, the pure silky whiteness of it was enough to raise my heartbeat. Just the sight of her thin waist and her slender shoulders was bewitching, and her exposed armpit and her jiggling orange bikini that looked ready to burst open is alluring enough, a truly gorgeous view. It's no use, I can't hold myself back for much longer!

Kasumi must have noticed my excited-adolescent stare, but even though she was a little bit shy, she didn't try to cover herself, and even tugged at the strap on her bikini, showing off her charm.

"S-Sakamoto, what do you think about my swimsuit? ...Although I already showed it to you yesterday, I did buy this for you. Don't you think this strap looks good, Sakamoto?"

What kind of situation is this?

"Lo-look, don't you think the pattern on the bikini top looks cute?"

"Y-Yeah..."

Kasumi purposely drew my attention to her body. Even though what you're doing is pleasing me, don't you feel embarrassed at all...?

"Compared with this, Sakamoto's swimsuit is also quite daring..."

"Oh, sorry. There's actually a lot of reasons for this."

Allow me to describe my attire for today: on the lower half of my body I was wearing a pair of The☆boomerang trunks that was bordering on sexual harassment. No matter how you looked at it, it clearly looked American. When put together with my savage look,

even if the beach was crowded with people, I could still freely swim at my leisure. As for why I would wear this in the first place, it's because when I was searching through my bag this morning, I discovered that the swimsuit I had originally brought had been switched with this one. It's probably a prank pulled by yesterday's me. Damn it.

"I do like... that bold kind of swimsuit..."

"Huh, what?"

"N-Nothing!"

Although I had faintly heard what she said, I decided to carry on pretending like I didn't hear anything. My youth was slowly falling apart.

"L-Let's get started with our swimming lesson. Here, hold onto my hand. We'll begin with learning how to kick your feet in the water, okay?"

"Alright, please do."

I grabbed both of Kasumi's hands, and used my feet to kick in the water. Ugh, this was embarrassing. Why would any dignified high school student do this kind of exercise? Moreover, just now, my hands almost touched Kasumi's bikini, making me flustered. However, Kasumi? Why are you bringing my hands closer to your breasts while occasionally mumbling things like, "What's done can't be undone..."? There's a reason for this right?

Oh, on a separate note, I don't know if it's because he either hates salt water or because he doesn't even know how to swim, but Kazeshiro didn't get in the water. He was currently reading a book

under the shade of the umbrella, probably feeling like someone decent here...

And so, I continued practicing with Kasumi for about an hour.

It would be much too embarrassing if I still didn't learn after practicing so much, so I slowly pretended to get the hang of it. Eventually, Kasumi allowed me to swim by myself, and in my joy, I freestyled across the water in one breath.

"Gasp"

I abruptly brought my head above the surface. The sky was painted in an alluring blue, the brilliant color scorching my sight.

"Amazing! Just amazing! You can already swim so well!"

"Mhm, and it's all thanks to your lessons."

I waved towards Kasumi as she noisily swam over. Of course I could swim well, since I already knew how to swim in the first place.

"You're so fast at learning new things, Sakamoto. During P.E. class, everyone keeps on telling me how amazing you are."

"Ever since I was little, I've always been good at physical activities."

I remember once Hikari Yumesaki told me, "Sakamoto's body is so easy to move in." However, I really don't like to exercise. Especially since I hate competing with other people.

"How enviable, Sakamoto is just too amazing. Really amazing..."

"Not really, I also have some things that I can't do."

If it weren't for Hikari Yumesaki, I would have never made a friend, experienced love, or be recognized as an upright person. The things that everyone else can easily do, are impossible for me. Like right now, that idiot was stuck in a hopeless situation, and yet I don't even know what to do to help her.

"....."

I lifted my body, and floated on the surface, my head cushioned against the water. The sound and the ice cold temperature of the water helped free me from my worries. =

"Hey, Sakamoto."

"Hm?"

Kasumi suddenly asked me,

"Are you... worried about something?"

"Huh— —?"

"I-I think it's... strange. Suddenly wanting to going on a trip, and all those other suspicious things..."

The anxiousness in her voice penetrated into my dense head.

"Perhaps you are... struggling with something. Probably something to do with the girl you like... right?"

".....That's"

Unable of coming up with a lie at this moment, I was extremely unhappy with myself.

I knew that this kind of response would only hurt Kasumi.

"...Kasumi, I'm sorry. I'm always causing you to worry about me."

I couldn't even tell her that she was right, and just awkwardly told her those pathetic words. However, she is a sharp girl, and it seems like she had managed to guess what was going on in my mind.

"I-It's fine. Because...I'm really happy. Just to be together with Sakamoto..."

She looked a bit lonely as she continued to talk.

"I hope that you will be able to tell me about it later. No problem...I'm fine with that..."

Her act of courage deeply moved me. Man, I'm so glad that I met her.

"Yeah, it does have something to do with the girl I like."

And so, I also gathered up my courage to say what was on my mind. I didn't look at Kasumi's expression, closed my eyes and slowly continued.

"I am really, really worried. Although I can't explain it properly, it's still really worrying. Even though she's acting as if it's nothing, and ignoring it, I know that she's actually a fragile person. She must really want to cry right now, but I can't do anything about it. She's probably really depressed, and when I think about that, I feel really worried, and scared..."

I softly let out the vague feelings in my heart. Kasumi probably feels concerned about me after hearing those words. But the truth is, this was how I really felt, so there's nothing I can do about it. As expected, Kasumi remained silent.

Unable to stand the silence, I floated on my back as I rested on the surface of the open ocean water, with my head raised up towards the blue sky.

The harsh sunlight scorching my skin, the intense heat, and the ice-cold water surrounding me felt really comfortable. I closed my eyes, shut out the noise around me, and my consciousness slowly drifted off into space— —

“Oh— —”

I suddenly felt something that was far hotter than the heat from the scorching sun. A comfortable warmth embraced my head from behind.

“Sakamoto, you just mentioned something weird, situation.”

“Huh?”

“You always make my heart skip, treating me like a girl. Although there are times when you cause me pain... but even so, Sakamoto still holds a special place in my heart.”

.....

“That’s why, Sakamoto, please don’t lose hope. I don’t want to see you have that kind of expression.”

The arms that were strongly embracing me were tightened.

“It’ll be okay, I know that for sure. You can do anything that you put your mind to, Sakamoto. Even if you can’t do anything right now, when that girl is really stuck in serious trouble, you will definitely stand up for her. And so... watching her from the sidelines is enough for now. When she actually starts to cry, you can

just be there to help wipe her tears. Sakamoto should be able to do that.”

There was sound coming from the waves and the ocean breeze, as life bustled in the surroundings and the ocean swayed.

But all the noise was swept aside, and I could only hear her soft whisper beside my ear.

Her arms, warmer than the scorching sun, were wrapped around my neck, causing my body to feel a burning sensation.

Wipe her tears huh.

“Will I be able to do that?”

“Of course.”

Kasumi’s warm and comforting words went straight to my heart.

Just this warmth was enough to heal my heartache.

After eating some yakisoba at the restaurant in the resort, we immediately headed to the hotel counter to check out. I dragged my tired body onto the rocking train. On the way home, Kasumi rested her head on my shoulder, probably because of heat exhaustion since her face was so red.

Upon arrival at the train station in the evening, I parted with Kazeshiro, and took Kasumi to her house on my bicycle. The clanking sound of the bicycle created a solitary atmosphere. What was the problem with me? My heart was throbbing. The red, evening sky barely allowed us to see each other’s face. I don’t know why but, as the sun slowly set, I felt as if it would never rise again.

Sitting in the back, Kasumi didn't let out any noise, and tightly held onto my back. Ah, so this was youth.

I had originally planned on dropping her off in front of her house, but she hesitantly refused.

"My older sister will see us..."

Her older sister must be a really scary person. Now I feel like meeting her.

"Sakamoto, do you have any plans later?"

"Hm?"

"If not then... I can..."

It'll be night time soon you know?

She didn't finish her words, but instead tenderly lifted her head towards me. Although she had a weak character, her feelings were strong.

"Sorry, I have to go home now."

"Is there something you have to do?"

".....No."

"...Oh, I see."

She let out a cheerful smile, and we waved goodbye to each other.

As the night grew darker, it took on a purple color. I thought that she was no longer looking this way, so I took a look back.

She was still watching me.

Two days later.

“Sigh...”

I opened the journal, and, after reading the entry, I let out a sigh.

After the trip, Hikari Yumesaki, who had thrown some huge tantrums, was finally satisfied.

“Sorry about causing you all sorts of trouble lately, Sakamoto. I tried calming down and thinking about it for a day, and realized that freaking out about it wasn’t going to fix anything. And so, I’m perfectly fine now! Although I’m a little bit worried, since it’s only five minutes, there’s plenty of time to act! Thanks for worrying about me! I’m very happy about it, partner☆”

Although she might have been showing off, at least now she’s finally calmed down. In fact, the time was longer reducing, and Kazeshiro and I will continue to look for a clue to fix this situation. I should be able to relax for now.

“Moving on, since it’s my hard-earned summer, I can play all I want! Today, I went to one of my favorite places and ate parfait. I haven’t had moonleaf parfait in so long, it’s absolutely the best!”

“Looks like she’s having fun.”

I was racking my brains out trying to figure out what “moonleaf ice cream” was, but in the end I came up with nothing. Whatever, I can just be relieved that she seems fine now.

However, there was one thing that I took note of.

“More important, I need to come up with something.”

Hikari Yumesaki concluded her entry in the notebook with this sentence.

“What does this mean?”

Although I was curious about it, Hikari Yumesaki didn't write anything else, probably because she didn't want me to interfere. Whatever, I can only silently watch her from the sidelines anyway. I'll watch, and watch, and when she starts to cry — —

“Then I guess I'll be there to help you wipe off your tears.”

I don't know if I would be able to do that. No, if I think about, it's definitely impossible.

However, Kasumi told me that I can do it. I'll trust her for now. I said to myself in my heart. I closed the notebook, and decided to forget about those puzzling words.

...But,

Maybe I should think more on the meaning behind those words.

It was around this time that Hikari Yumesaki entered a relationship with another girl.

Tomorrow, I will die.
You will revive. 2

CUT4

昨日、君は彼女に会う。
俺はながったことにする。



CUT 4 – Yesterday You Met Her, and I Pretended That Nothing Happened

“Let’s unravel the secrets of Sakamoto’s body! Next up, for our first topic, Hikari here will uncover Sakamoto’s secrets step-by-step! Now then, our first question is, “Why doesn’t Sakamoto cut his hair!?” The truth is, he really takes note of his fierce appearance. That’s why — —”

— —Slam

“What kind of annoying alarm is this...”

The worst possible way to ever get out from bed is be woken up by a weird alarm, I couldn’t help but let out a complaint.

Yesterday’s me must have changed my cellphone’s alarm sound. Whatever, this was nothing new. That idiot would think up of some terribly mischievous prank every day. Nice prank, you idiot.

“.....Better get up.”

I sat up, and changed the alarm back. What day of the week is it again?

I wondered as I headed towards the living room. My little sister probably woke up just now, since her hair a mess, but she’s still as cute as ever. After I exchanged greetings with her, I took out the sandwich that I had made yesterday, and ate it as breakfast. I sat face to face with Yukiko, and neither of us said a word as we ate our breakfast. But don’t get me wrong; it’s summer vacation, but we’re always eating together. It’s just a sign of our good relationship. It’s definitely not because we don’t have any friends that we’re always eating together. It’s also not because there’s no one wanting to hang

out with us siblings. Ah, this sandwich is so salty, but why does it taste so good...

I sighed and looked towards the television, and on the screen is probably an idol group, but I don't know if it's a concert or a commercial being aired.

"I've been seeing those girls on TV a lot recently."

"They're about to hold a concert promo, and since they're always in commercials, I'm pretty sure they're just advertising themselves."

"Wow, you sure know a lot."

"As a writer, I should always be familiar with the latest trends. If I remember correctly, this idol group is called 'Eden'."

Hmph. Who cares what they're called.

Soon after our dull conversation, the commercial also ended. Immediately after, a shopping program began airing.

"Up next, we will be showcasing today's merchandise! This product is called the 'Ring of Happiness'! They say that wearing this ring will bring you happiness, and for only ¥10,000 you can have it now! Let's hear some experi—"

"Yukiko, do you like watching this kind of stuff?"

"It's not that I want to, just that there's nothing else to watch."

In the pointless shopping program, there was a lady promoting that poorly designed ring in an upbeat mood. Goodness, is there anyone who would actually buy this? Although, it's probably because there are people who would buy that this would show up on TV.

“Brother, if you’re are crazy for these kinds of stupid things, I’m pretty sure your life is done for.”

“I know. You too, don’t waste money.”

“Y-Yukiko doesn’t waste money. Yukiko is a person with common sense.”

Who knows, according to Hikari Yumesaki’s reports, your room has plenty of toys like pen-sized bugs and miniature cameras. What are you even going to do with those things? Do you want to become a spy?

The television show then continued by unendingly advertising the ring’s capability, showing off its magical powers. Really though, anyone who would get excited over buying something like this must be a complete idiot. I don’t believe that kind of an idiot even exists. I had such a thought as I returned to my room, pulled off the ring that I had been wearing on my right middle finger since I woke up this morning, and then I quickly flipped open the notebook—

“Look, Sakamoto, look, this is the ‘Ring of Happiness’! I bought it from the shopping channel! They say that wearing this ring will bring you happiness! If you wear it while on the train, you might be able to take a peek at some cute girl’s boobs☆ What a treat~♪”

“LOOKS LIKE THERE’S AN IDIOT RIGHT HERE, YOU DUMBASS— — —!!”

I used a fast ball pitch to throw the ring away, and groaned as I faced the journal.

“Whatever, at least it looks like she’s in a good mood.”

Hikari Yumesaki threw a fit when her revival time was reduced by five minutes, but fortunately, she's calmed down lately. Since then, she had turned back into the same old energetic and cheerful girl from before.

However — —

I looked around the room, and I'm speechless,

In addition to all of the doujinshi and pillow cases, the room was cluttered with otaku goods, not including the anime blu-rays and the noticeably expensive figurines. Wait, what the hell? I don't know when it happened but the parsley in the room is gone, and now there's a Venus flytrap in its place. Now that I think about it, the parley had disappeared on that day when Kazeshiro was in a bad mood. Could it be that she forced Kazeshiro to eat it?

"I feel like she's been wasting a lot of money lately."

Although Hikari Yumesaki has calmed down for now, it's clear that she's probably still given up on herself. Even though she's always been a wasteful idiot, I didn't think that she would actually carelessly buy this kind of stupid ring.

"Nevertheless, this is also a ring that Hikari Yumesaki gave to me..."

.....No, no, no! Snap out of it!

And so, I wrote the words, "**Give me a break**" into the notebook. Then I picked the ring up, and languidly slumped into my chair. Sigh, I've had enough, the day's barely started yet and I've already let out a retort. This isn't just normal suffering anymore, I'm practically being suplexed every day.

I couldn't help but let out a sigh, as the current situation was that I was being chewed out by Hikari Yumesaki. However, at this time, I hadn't realized it yet.

That a new problem had already begun.

"Huh?"

On that day, after I had finished eating breakfast and had returned to my room, I could not help but furl my eyebrows.

"I'm out of money."

I opened up my wallet to check, and my mind immediately filled with questions. Wait, I remember taking out some money two days ago, so what did that idiot buy this time?

I put down my wallet, and opened the notebook.

"Ha~ha, I don't wanna go out at all today~ I didn't take a single step outside~"

And what entered my sight was this incredibly suspicious entry.

"Something's not right..."

Wondering about it, I went on the computer and looked up "sexy dream" on Twitter... Nothing, there's nothing written. My cellphone was also suspicious, because yesterday's records were all deleted — — Hmm, that retard can't possibly go an entire day without calling anyone. Tsk, it looks like she's hiding something.

"Don't underestimate, Hikari Yumesaki. If it's an investigation, I definitely won't lose to you."

I gleefully declared, walked to my computer, and entered my little sister's blog "Yukirin's Big Brother Observation Diary☆". Even when Hikari Yumesaki didn't write a proper notebook entry like how it is today, the little sister's blog was a great tool for investigation, an essential resource. However, the problem was, I felt some indescribable guilt from checking my little sister's blog every day.

On a side note, the blog had received a lot of criticism, and there's always some strange comment in the comments section. Recently, Yukiko has been gradually moving from her blog to her Twitter. She posted only on her Twitter yesterday, and her twitter entries are in a corner of the log.

"Now then, what did Yukiko see yesterday..."

I whispered to myself as I searched up yesterday's entry. What I saw was — —

"I managed to steal my brother's worn shirt!"

"You idiot!"

I was wondering where my shirt went!

"It smells so nice... I guess I'll give it to Kaoru when I'm done. Then he'll give me some answers to the homework as payment."

No don't!! Don't do that! Also, what are you doing with my shirt!?

"It looks like brother's going out. Let's follow him again today."

"Ah, he suddenly bumped into Kaoru."

"Oh good, Kaoru's assailing him. I'll only allow Kaoru to touch my older brother♪"

"Huh? Huh? Brother?"

"WWWhhhhhhaaaaaat!? They're flirting like that in public!?"

What happened!? What did they do!? What kind of flirting did they just do!?

"This is wrong! It's so lewd! Please continue!"

"Wo-oah!?"

"Nevertheless, you should control yourselves in public. Don't you guys have any common sense?"

Wait! How did you calm down so fast!?

"Kaoru had on a really girly face when he ran into the public restrooms. It looks like I can make some progress on my light novel manuscript tonight..."

"Ah, brother went into Café Moonleaf."

Huh? Café Moonleaf?

Café Moonleaf? Isn't that the coffee shop near the high school? Unlike other places, Café Moonleaf is kind trendy, and popular with a lot of female customers.

"Brother ate a huge amount of ice cream by himself. It must taste really good."

"He's talking with the waitress. That waitress is being really close to him! She's using her miniskirt to tempt him!"

"Huh? She's whispering into his ear. I'll try and read her lips..."

Wait, you know how to read lips?

"!? S-She wants him to wait for her until 2! I have a bad feeling about this!"

"That trash of a woman is doing that with Yukirin's brother... I need do a thorough investigation her, and then reveal all of her personal information on the internet... Once I find out where she lives, I'll throw bricks at her house!"

"I've caught up with them. They're just eating tiramisu."

...Huh? What's this? Why did it cut off?

"Ah... I lost them... That woman clearly saw that I was busy, and yet she still held onto me, telling me that I was cute and that she wanted to take my picture. So disrespectful..."

Ah, that happens sometimes, because it seems that Yukiko is really popular with female college students and office ladies, and I see her get dragged into stuff like that all the time.

"Sob, Sob~~~ I lost them~~~"

"Is this where it ends?"

The rest of it was just a bunch of her complaints, and her savage rhetoric made me unconsciously want to ask, "Are you a grouchy mother-in-law?"

I turned off the computer, and opened the notebook once again — — sigh, how should I do this.

"...If that's how it is..."

And so.

Later that afternoon, I arrived at Café Moonleaf.

Honestly, this particular cafe isn't really special, but the store's waitress uniforms are definitely the catchy parts. I guess it's probably down to the manager's tastes, and the uniform designs are decent. Really cute, and no matter how you put it, the miniskirts are pretty great too. Just look at her, that really pretty waitress, those plump thighs that were bigger than all the other waitresses, and coupled with those sexy stockings, it's really wonderful...

"...Huh?"

Wait, what's this? She's heading this way. N-Not good! Did she notice me staring at her!? Don't get me wrong! I just wanted to make sure I could remember what she looked like, so I can slowly recall it when I get home — —

"Welcome, you're here again today, Senpai."

"Ah!?"



The waitress struck up a conversation with me, and I couldn't help but let out a blurt.

When she saw that, she put her hand on her lips and giggled — — wait, w-was the girl that Yukiko was talking about on her blog...

"It looks like Senpai came again today, Misaki is really happy."

"Huh, oh — — oh, heh heh. Uh, yeah."

This waitress was so pretty that calling her gorgeous was an understatement; her warm smile as she greeted me completely overwhelmed me, so I just returned with a random sound. That reply sounded so bad that anyone would think, "Where did this virgin come from?" But the thing is, I really couldn't help it.

I pulled myself together, and took another look at the girl named Misaki in front me.

She had delicate hair that fell to her shoulders, her face a pure white, and moreover, a mesmerizing apple scent.

Her refined features pieced together a lovely look, and her long eyelashes complimented her large eyes. I can see a pair of silver earrings between her hair, and as a whole, she gave off an elegant appearance — — yes, that's right. She fully embodied the meaning of the word "Princess." But anyway, what attracted my eyes most were those legs, simple as that.

While I was absorbed in my musing, the young waitress let out another warm smile, and asked,

"Senpai, will you be ordering some more ice cream today?"

"Huh? Oh, no, I'll just have a cup of iced coffee."

It seems from her question that Hikari Yumesaki frequently orders ice cream. The thing however is that I don't have the guts to be a man and eat ice cream by myself, and so I just simply ordered a cup of iced coffee.

"Teehee, Senpai, don't you always come here to order ice cream?"

Huh?

"I'm so glad, you've finally overcome the ice cream."

"———!"

S-So cute...

She put her hands together as she smiled, and I furiously blushed. Crap. This girl is way too cute...

As I got absorbed into my thinking, a scent of apple flew close — — hold on, wait a second. T-This distance — — it was close enough to kiss — —

"My shift ends at 3 today. Will you be waiting for me until then, senpai?"

"———!"

An angel whispered softly into my ear, and she was so close that I couldn't help but think that her lips were almost touching my ear — — no, maybe they were already touching?

"Uhhh..."

This dizzying breath and body scent took me away, and this teenager Sakamoto here couldn't answer properly, ended up like melted ice cream. Misaki finished giving her greetings and slowly walked away, and I saw what looked like a pair of angelic wings on her back. And those graceful legs...Wait, just how many times have I talked about her legs? Still I have to say, she's very pretty.

"You're younger than me right, Misaki?"

I remained seated in a daze, watching Misaki work hard in the shop, and without realizing it, it was 3. Not good, not good. I can't afford to space out right now. I came here today to investigate what Hikari Yumesaki was sneaking around for. I can't forget my original purpose.

But I guess talking with a cute girl is also a form of investigation...erm, what should I do? Maybe I'll just wait for her in front of the shop. There shouldn't be anything wrong with waiting. I've never waited for a girl before, so I don't quite know what to do. What should I be doing right now?

"Kept you waiting, Senpai."

As I was running such simulations in my head using all of the knowledge I've gained from manga and anime, Misaki came out from the back of the café wearing her casual clothes.

Alright, first wave your hand at her, and then —

"N-No problem. I just got here anyways."

How's that!

"...Huh?"

...Uh, what?

There's an overwhelming silence. Wait, w-what the? Did I say something wrong? I was waiting for a long time, but isn't that a nice answer? It's like I didn't realize I didn't wait for long — —

"Teehee."

I'm being laughed at!?

"Thank you for being so considerate, senpai. Teehee, You're so cute today."

"Wait, c-cute — —?"

"If you don't mind me asking... How does Misaki look today?"

"Hm?"

Hearing my awkward reply, Misaki lightly lifted her short skirt while showing off a dazzling smile, chortling away in the center of the world — —

"Does Misaki look like what you expected of me, Senpai?"

So she said.

I saw the wings of an angel at that moment. That's probably not an illusion.

"Y-Yes..."

"Teehee, it looks like dressing up was worth the reward."

Her index finger tapped her peachy lips, and a refreshing laugh came out from her mouth. Whelps, she's way too cute. I can't handle this.

"Well, I'll have to depend on you again today, Senpai. Would you like to accompany Misaki for some delicious crepes?"

“Oh, uh, sure.”

And so, she glided in front of me, headed towards a pastry shop popular with girls.

Her long, flowing hair swayed with the wind, and a light apple scent reminded me of her innocence over and over again. Suddenly, she turned her face back, and that sidelong face caused me to instinctively gulp.

“She’s so cute...”

I’m just taking her to eat some desserts, but if I can see her expression of joy, then it would all be worth it.

I said these words to this unmasculine me, and proceed to chase after her.

“So you found out about Misaki Koudera? She’s a waitress at the Café Moonleaf, and because I wanted to eat some ice cream, I would always go to that café during the summer vacation, and then I got familiar with her.”

“Oh..”

Two days later.

After calming down, I opened the diary and remembered what had happened two days ago as I read the entry.

It appeared that Hikari Yumesaki was hiding something from me.

I was feeling suspicious, and investigated, encountering the waitress Misaki at Café Moonleaf. It seemed that she was somehow related

to Hikari Yumesaki's secret, and to confirm this, I delved deeper, and then...

"....."

— —Do I look like what you expected of me, Senpai?

"She's so cute..."

Reminiscing that scene, I could not help but smile.

The way that she whispered into my ear was like an angel's, the way that she smiled and her long, flowing hair was like an angel's, and those beautiful legs...

Anyway, what I'm trying to say is, I was captivated by that little angel, and in the end, I didn't ask her about anything, so I went home with absolutely nothing.

Thus, I just wrote to Hikari Yumesaki in the notebook, **"I met up with that Misaki Koudera girl. Just who is she?"** Hikari Yumesaki's reply was as follows,

"She's a first year who goes to the same high school as you, Sakamoto. She's a really nice girl! I was enjoying the sight of her beautiful legs when I accidentally knocked over my ice cream, and it even got onto another customer's clothes. But she forgave me! She even brought me another cup of ice cream! It was wonderful! Cute is justice!"

Yep, this I can agree with.

"I went to see Misaki-chan again today~ We ate crepes together~"

"It looks like she's having fun."

The entry ended there.

Yep, this is normal. She met an attractive underclassman at a café, who unexpectedly got along with her. They slowly became acquainted, and hanged out together when her shift was over. Looks like that's just itall. Even though her body is now a guy's, Hikari Yumesaki's heart was still that of a girl's, so for her, being friends with another girl was probably fun.

Our body is stuck in a special situation, and personally, I don't want to make any unnecessary friends, but this kind of friend shouldn't be a problem. That idiot still feels uneasy about her losing five minutes, so I'm thinking that as long as she can lighten up a bit, that should be fine. The thing is...

"Hm."

I feel like I've being lied to.

"Why did she hide this from me?"

There was nothing to be ashamed about. Oh well, I guess it doesn't matter.

I pulled out my cellphone, and looked back at the email I got two days ago. The sender was actually that cute girl, Misaki.

"Thank you Senpai for coming to the café today. Remember to come again! Misaki will really like to see you again, senpai."

Misaki will really like to see you again, Senpai! Misaki will really like to see you again! And I quote, Misaki will really like to see you again!
Heheheh.

"Whatever, as long as she's happy."

And so, the incident came to an end. I guess it's really great to meet a decent underclassman.

Now relaxed, I decided that I would quietly spend the rest of my summer in peace.

"Huh?"

Two days later, I had opened up my wallet to take a look, and my heart skipped a beat.

"...It's empty again."

The money that I took out from the bank two days ago was already gone.

"....."

I looked around my room, but I didn't find any suspicious objects.

There's no increase in number of anime goods or Venus flytrap. In fact, that Venus flytrap was still sitting by itself in the corner of the room.

"Huuuhhh?"

I took out my cellphone, and looked through yesterday's emails.

"Senpai, did Misaki look like what you expected today? Misaki is very happy. Misaki will truly cherish the teacup that Senpai bought for me."

.....

"Senpai, remember to come again. A day without Senpai would be really lonely."

"Oh-ho..."

Soon after, I opened the notebook.

“Wuaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh! How sad — — — !”

“What happened!?”

The entry started with such frightening words, which gave me a shock.

“Misaki-chan’s family went through a divorce, and she’s really low on money! Not only that, her younger siblings are still very young, so she has no choice but to work for their family income... I know just how difficult being in a single-parent household is! That’s why I’ll help her out!”

“Oh, so Misaki also had this kind of problem huh.”

There’s also the fact that Hikari Yumesaki had such an experience before. Well, that doesn’t matter right now. Since that happens, I guess the teacup is okay. Yep.

“.....”

But having said that, I couldn’t help but feel an ominous premonition.

Why is that...I wonder?

Two days later.

“...Huh!?”

Having just woken up, I felt a strange sense of dread and hastily opened my wallet, and proceeded to let out a gasp. **I-It’s empty again...**

"Misaki-chan says that her little brother has the flu! They don't have enough money to go to the hospital... How sad! That's why I bought a lot of things for her! Sakamoto should also buy some medicine and bottled water to give her. Misaki-chan is suffering right now!"

"...The flu, huh..."

O-okay. Even though it's summer, I guess it's still possible to get the flu. Fine.

As I convinced myself of this, I pulled up my little sister's blog.

"That woman is always having my brother buy things for her. She should be more reserved about it. Could it be that she's turning my brother into her sla... No, no, no. I'm thinking too much into this...right?"

"...I'm thinking too much."

I took out my cellphone and looked at an email.

"Senpai, thank you for helping Misaki today. Misaki will definitely repay you. Once Misaki's younger brother gets better —"

Then what?

"Misaki will give you the Misaki you've been hoping for."

"Heheh..."

Crap, I let out a weird sound. Besides that, what I've been hoping for... Hoho.

"We-well, we can help each other out this way. I guess..."

That's right. Surely tomorrow, such a problem — —

“.....”

Two days later, my worst fears have come true. There was no need to explain.

“Sob sob... Misaki-chan’s father returned home with his debts and he took her money away... How cruel! Her father is such a terrible person! He even told her that if she didn’t like it, she could go work at a nightclub! And so Misaki-chan could only cry about her misfortunes...”

Yeah, seriously...

“That’s why I bought her a necklace that she wanted! Everything will be okay as long as this much can make her happy!”

“...Nothing is okay, this is definitely not okay...”

I went on my little sister’s blog, and sure enough, she also had her suspicions.

“My brother really has been turned into a slave! This is bad! I tried to tell him, but he replied with, ‘We cannot forget that as humans we should trust each other, and a girl with those kind of legs is definitely trustworthy. The beauty of her legs reflect the beauty of her heart! (Cutey~)’ That has to be the most disgusting thing I’ve recently heard! Ugghhh — — — — —!”

Ah, so that’s why you were showing off your skimpy skirt in front of me while we were eating breakfast.

“That trash of a woman... Acting like she’s pure, using her legs to captivate my brother... She’s obviously a manipulative bitch! I’ll never forgive her! She’s so cruel to use my my poor, unpopular virgin of a brother!”

Enough with that!

"I need to show her just how scary Yukirin can be..."

After reading this final statement, I closed the blog, and took a deep breath.

"What a little sister... Anyways, I can't let Hikari Yumesaki get tricked again."

Although I don't want to believe it, the situation is obvious..

Thinking back, I did visit a café normally, and that's not enough to get such an amazing girl to be my friend. I thought it was weird; She wasn't frightened by my scary looks.

"Senpai, was Misaki as you expected today again? No, that can't be true. Misaki let you see the weak side of me. Misaki's sorry. Please don't hate Misaki. Misaki is sorry for not being a strong girl. Misaki regrets it."

I looked over the messages yesterday. Sigh... You don't have to apologize like that—realizing the problem with my thoughts, I slammed my head on the table to clear my head. Get a hold of yourself!

"The me tomorrow definitely won't be able to control himself; I need to think of something..."

As such, I should probably just cut off ties with her, and expose her for what she is.

I told myself these words in my heart, and furiously prepared to storm out.

Just you wait, Misaki Koudera!

A few hours later.

“Senpai?”

I-I can’t take this anymore...

“Sen~pai~?”

“ — — Yes!”

Misaki’s voice dragged me back into reality.

Not good, not good, I’m being mesmerized.

“Really? Here, come here, how does Misaki look today?”

“O-Oh. Pretty nice...yeah.”

We’re currently at a clothing store near the station.

A while ago, I had decided that I couldn’t allow the situation to continue, and so I immediately rushed to the café. It was possible that this would anger Hikari Yumesaki, but I couldn’t tolerate the problem any longer.

Just as I took a breath in order to tell Misaki, who was coming to serve coffee, that I wanted to end our relationship, she suddenly said, “Please wait for me until 1:00 today. I’m so happy, I can spend more time with Senpai.” And so I just gave up. It was 1:00pm, and I was in front of the café, preparing myself to break off immediately, but she told me, “Misaki will let Senpai see a hidden side today.” I could only give up again, telling myself that I’ll just do it on the way home. Misaki proposed that she wanted to go a clothing store, I thought that she would have me pay for it again. I took a deep breath, intending to break up, and she unexpectedly said, “Look at

this really short skirt and this pair of knee socks.” I reluctantly gave up again, giving her just this one last time. Misaki gathered nearly twenty miniskirts from the store, ran into the changing room, pulled the curtain, and tried them on. It was then that I finally snapped out of it, knowing that it couldn’t go on any longer. I took a deep breath and, hold on, wait a second! Isn’t this a rare opportunity? Won’t I be able to witness, with a clear conscience, twenty instances of Zettai Ryouiki? Once I thought it about it, I decided that waiting a little longer wouldn’t do any harm. Then I proceeded to think about how much money I brought in my wallet today.

In this moment, the curtains to the changing room opened, and Misaki came out. She was wearing a skirt shorter than usual, one that almost reached the level of a micro-miniskirt, with her beautiful legs extending out from under — — After undergoing twenty baptisms of Zettai Ryouiki, my conscience was long impure Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhh! Grab ahold of yourself! Now is not the time to be overcome by your virgin soul!!

“Senpai! You’re being so absent-minded today. Misaki is really bored.”

“Huh, oh, sorry.”

No, no, no, now is not the time to apologize!

“Senpai, are you actually sorry?”

“Y-Yeah I am. Uh huh, really.”

Misaki brought her face closer, her eyes inspecting me. I couldn’t help but take a step back. She smells good... You know, I hadn’t noticed while I was so focused on her legs, but now looking at it, her breasts are also quite...

“Whatever, Senpai is very ‘special’ to Misaki, so Misaki will forgive you for now. Teehee.”

“S-Special?”

Where did these sweet words come from?

“Giggle. Senpai is the only person special to Misaki. That’s why —”

She showed off the piece she had picked out that looked very expensive, the super short miniskirt.

“Misaki wants to let Senpai see... Misaki in a cute miniskirt.”

Ah, IT’S HERE!!!!!! IT’S HERE! SAKAMOTO!

Whenever I thought about those cute, large eyes, the length of that really short skirt, and how she would thank me once I bought those kinds of things for her, my self-control would be completely fractured. But I must make my stand here! Today is the day that I do this!

“Um....”

Even though I was mentally prepared, I still couldn’t say it properly. Stay strong, Akitsuki!

“Senpai?”

“Well, you see...”

Take a deep breath!

“Senpai, what’s wrong? You don’t look so well.”

“It’s nothing, I’m sorry, today — — WWWhhhhhhaaaatttt!?”

Boing.

Something sounded as if two soft objects had collided, and her soft breasts were pressed up against my body. Oi, you — —!

“Senpai, don’t move, let me take a look at your face. You may have a fever.”

“Ah, about that —!?”

Wait, your breasts! Don’t press your breasts so close! No, please don’t!

“Senpai, this isn’t good, your face is so red. Let me take a better look...”

That pure, innocent face came even closer.

No, don’t lose Akitsuki! You have to tell her right now — —

“You know, Senpai, let’s change the subject for now.”

Hoh, her breath reached my lips. So, an angel’s — — No...

“Misaki just want to touch Senpai today, is that okay?”

With a demonic whisper, she extended her slender white hands, and cupped them around my cheeks. Hey, the subject’s been changed by a lot now!

“Senpai, maybe you should also try touching me too. Here, you can touch me anywhere you want.”

No, this kind of situation...

“Hey, Senpai.”

Wait a minute, hey — —

“If Senpai buys clothes for Misaki today...then Misaki will be sure to please Senpai too.”

.....

On the way home.

I smiled at the message Misaki sent to me with love, and sighed.

“In the end, I bought it for her...”

I’m such an idiot...

“Why would you say such a thing!? Sakamoto is such a penny-pincher!”

“Even if you say so, the fact still remains true.”

Two days later, I woke up with a lasting sense of gloom.

Two days before, Mr. Virgin here was defeated by the seductress, and suffered serious humiliation. I wrote in the journal, “Misaki is turning us into her slave, please don’t go see her again.”

I had even prepared myself, for writing this would surely anger Hikari Yumesaki...

“Misaki-chan is a pitiful child, you hear me? Misaki-chan would never do those kind of things! Since she helped me before, she must be a very kind-hearted person. Why don’t you understand? Sakamoto is an idiot! Dumbass!”

“Who’re you calling a dumbass...”

Faced with this reply, I could only groan. Isn’t this just like one of those situations? The words of a poor girl who got duped by a scumbag of a man? Now that I think about it, isn’t Hikari Yumesaki

a bit too concerned about Misaki? So what if she helped you...
Whatever, her fault for having such a personality.

"I want to trust her too."

But unfortunately, I wprn't. Most definitely not. This situation has gone too far for me to remain indecisive.

If I allow Hikari Yumesaki to continue being with Misaki, then I'll be heading towards bankruptcy. It's a shame, but it's time to end things between us.

I used one hand to type on the keyboard, and opened up Yukirin's blog.

"Brother, please wake up... I've already tried to persuade you, but you still refuse to see things for what they are. Now you can't even see anything anymore..."

Oh, it looks like Yukiko is quite worried.

"Tomorrow, I follow that girl one more time and find some evidence. Then brother will have to believe me. If that doesn't work, then I'll have a duel with her!"

"...No matter what, I have to finish this today."

It seems that if I let this go on, there will be severe consequences. If I can, I'd like to smother it before it gets worse

"Let's not focus on that for now. Today, I bought her a cute pair of sandals, and she was very happy. I have to protect her beautiful smile. Misaki-chan is a good person."

I continued reading the journal entry.

"I have to make her happy."

“...Right, I decided.”

Having read the last line, I swore to myself that, no matter what, I had to tell her today.

I might get hated by Hikari Yumesaki, but I don't care. I can't stand watching her get tricked like this any longer. We are two souls in one body, each sitting on the same boat. If tomorrow's me wants to head towards the wrong direction, then I'll just have to walk a hundred steps towards the other direction. Until she can't go back the other way.

“This might be the only time I else make you cry.”

I picked up the mask of “sexy dream” from the corner of my desk.

I put it in my pocket, believing that it would give me courage. Then I stood up.

Come, let's battle, Misaki Koudera.

That afternoon, I felt as if the temperature had risen quite a bit.

As always, once we left Café Moonleaf, we went near the station. The only difference was that I could feel the heat on my skin and my conscience weighing on me. Good, at least my head was cooler than usual.

“Senpai, today your face looks depressed. What's wrong?”

“Oh...there's just something on my mind.”

On a whim, I let out a vague statement, and her face suddenly took on a dark look. Don't falter, Akitsuki!

“Do you not like how Misaki look today?”

“No, it’s nothing like that.”

I tried to not look her in the eye and replied in a cold tone.

Silence fell between us. She seemed to hate the awkward atmosphere more than I did, so she spoke first,

“Senpai, in your heart, what is Misaki to you?”

What are you to me...huh.

“Why do you ask?”

“Teehee, hm, why indeed.”

Hm?

“Senpai, this— —”

Just as I was struck by confusion—

—It’s here.

She’s pointing at a pair of rings on display behind the window.

Hold up...you can’t just choose those importantly symbolic things today. I bet they’re pretty expensive too.

“Would you like to buy one Misaki?”

“.....”

Her expression was different now.

Her face was blushing red, and her eyes seemed blurry.

Honestly, I want to know the answer too. I also want to believe in her one more time.

But, I've already decided. So there's no reason to ask why. I don't have a choice, right? For the person dearest to me — —

"...No. I won't buy this."

" — — Eh!"

This unexpected answer left her eyes wide open. I mustered up courage, and stared right into those beautiful eyes. Ah, her eyes are really pretty. So pretty that one would wonder what they looked like when she cries.

"A-A-Are you sure, s-senpai? This is Misaki's wish."

She was probably surprised. She clenched her teeth and her voice was aa bit shaky.

"If you buy this for Misaki, Misaki will belong to you from now on, okay?"

".....No."

I flatly refused.

"Don't say that to me, alright? Senpai, look at Misaki."

"I said no."

"Why? Misaki wants you to spoil her, Senpai. To pamper Misaki."

"....."

"Stop teasing me, Actually, you're going to buy it for Misaki right? Right, Sen — —"

Ugh, enough — —!

"I said no!!"

“———!”

I shouted at Misaki, and my voice was so loud that even I was frightened. The people around us all glanced in our direction. Well, this is awkward. I really want to apologize, to put on a sympathetic smile and let things be bygone. But, but...

“...You’ve probably used this method before, and tricked countless guys into being your slave right?”

“.....”

“Don’t you think that doing this kind of thing...is pathetic?”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

“.....I’m sorry.”

Through the insufferable awkwardness of this prickly atmosphere, there was finally an apology.

...But the one who apologized was me.

“Sigh———”

While I was frustrated with my own mental weakness, she let out a sigh, dispelling the apprehension.

“Looks like it’s over now, Senpai.”

Her smile still had a pure elegance to it. However, her eyes no longer contained any pretense in them.

The demoness has finally appeared.

“Well, I guess I’ve taken enough advantage for me to stop now. I was being so affectionate towards Senpai, did you enjoy it? Giggle, was it enough for a pleasurable dream, Senpai?”

The sweet underclassman from before had disappeared, and standing in front of me was a demoness. In response to her words, I could only clench fists with desperate tolerance.

You know what, forget it. I don’t have to be so uptight.

Honestly, she really did tug at my heartstrings. So even if she does make fun of me, I can’t do anything about it. It’s also true that I enjoyed it. As such, I can only tolerate it for now.

But even though I was going to tolerate it...

“Senpai really does smile like an idiot. Especially yesterday.”

“Huh—?”

I couldn’t help but widen my eyes. Yesterday...

“To actually believe in all of those obvious lies, just how stupid are you?”

“———!”

...What’s this?

“I thanked you a little bit and you got so giddy. Giggle, I thought it was hilarious.”

.....

"You always say something like, 'You helped me before, so it's natural for me to buy you a little something,' and then you open up your wallet. Giggle, it's because you get hung up over such things that no one actually likes you, you idiot."

.....!

I felt my face heat up. To think this woman could say such words.

My lips trembled, my throat was dry, and a stinging sensation was deep within my eyes.

Her following words finally lit my fuse.

"Just what were you expecting? Having lewd hopes, splurging money on me; are you planning to take me to a hotel or something? Teehee, I mean really, for such a stupid reason — —"

"SHUT UP — — — — —!!"

".....!"

I exploded.

The smile on her face finally disappeared, revealing a look that I've never seen before.

It seems...it seems that I can't take it anymore.

It didn't matter how she made fun of me. Even if she humiliated me, even if she tricked me, I could take it because it was just as she said: I'm an idiot. I mean, I'm just an unpopular delinquent. I'm already used to such bad luck, but, but — —

"I really...did like you."

It seems that the one thing I couldn't forgive was Hikari Yumesaki's kindness being mocked.

"Yesterday's me really did like you. Do you know just how much he worried about you? He trusted you so much, even though you only helped him once, but he was truly grateful to you, even to the point of stubbornness. Yet...yet you—"

In a weeping voice, I spat out the feelings in my heart.

I believed that my emotions would reach her.

I believed in Hikari Yumesaki.

Hikari Yumesaki had always believed in her, concerned over her.

Here, I'll believe too, so tell me if I'm wrong. Tell me, that you're actually a kind-hearted girl—

".....Tsk."

However.

What answered me was a cold smile. Ah, so it was like this...

"How boring, I thought you were going to say something else, but it turned out to just be some leftover sentiments. Don't think that just because I helped you means that I have feelings for you. That was just my job as a waitress. Coming up with such a big misunderstanding, don't you think that it's sad for you to get played with like a fool?"

...played like a fool, huh.

"...I don't think so. I wasn't a fool. Yesterday's me was kind."

That person isn't an idiot. No, she is. It's true that after going through that tantrum, she probably wanted to escape reality, creating a mess all the time. Becoming friends with Misaki was probably also one of her methods to escape reality. Buying Misaki so many presents, winning Misaki's favor, they were all for relieving her stress.

There was no way she could have trusted Misaki completely. However, regardless of the costs, she still did these "fruitless" things, definitely because she didn't think that she was being fooled. She's kinder than anyone else. She was always convincing herself, always believing in Misaki — —

"Do you even have the right to say that yourself?"

Yet, my words had no way of reaching Misaki. She brutally trampled on my hopes, turning away.

Dammit...why won't you understand?

"If you continue to do this...there will be a day when you regret it...."

And so I tried my best to plead with her.

"That's right. I decided that the moment when I regret it, I will cry like Senpai is doing right now."

Having said that, she took off the fine necklace from her neck, and stuffed it into her pocket.

And then without any hesitation, without any remorse, she said,

"Goodbye, Senpai. Take care."

These distasteful tears I could not shed began to swell up in my eyes.

“Dammit...I screwed up...why did I have to get stuck in this mess?”

Under the scorching sun, I suddenly realized the blistering heat, and weakly walked towards the station, while tearfully complaining.

If I could, I wanted to peacefully resolve this problem, even if I got unreasonably mistreated somewhat, so that we could greet each other with a smile the next time we meet. However, I’m just some inexperienced kid, with no ability to do this.

“How should I break this to Hikari Yumesaki...”

I’ll probably get hated. Maybe I should write about Misaki’s true nature in the notebook... No, better not. That’ll only depress her . I guess I’ll just shoulder all the burden myself. I’m going to be hated anyway. Besides, Hikari Yumesaki is also a kind girl, so there will always be a day when she forgives me.

“Si~gh....”

Crap. I can’t stop sighing.

Being hated is actually really painful. No, I was always being despised by people before. It’s probably because I’ve been treated better recently that I feel wronged... Man, I feel hurt. I really want to talk this out with someone, but I don’t have any friends willing to do so.

“...Help your brother out.”

I muttered to myself as I pulled out my cellphone, connected online, and opened up my little sister's blog. I feel like I've been going on her blog a lot lately, and this feels so wrong. But luckily, no matter what, I can count on my little sister to back me up. Wow, I would've never thought that there would be a day when this blog would soothe me. How pitiful.

".....Huh?"

My eyes focused on the Twitter sidebar of my sister's blog. She just tweeted something. No, it was more than that — Eh? She's still updating?

"What is this?"

I quickly opened up the webpage, and browsed through the tweets. What was written was — —

"THAT BITCH — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —!!"

"What the!?"

What the... Let's look from the beginning... Now that I think about it, didn't Yukiko say that she was going to following us today? Did she watch the entire thing?

"I WON'T FORGIVE HER I WON'T FORGIVE HER I WON'T FORGIVE HER! She's doing that to my kind-hearted older brother.... AAARRRRGGGHHH!!"

This is bad, Yukiko has completely lost it.

"Brother... His back looks so sad... got to service him properly during our bath. Yukirin is brother's best friend..."

"More importantly, I'll never forgive that bitch! I'll thoroughly stalk her, and find something to blackmail her for! I'll chase her down to the ends of Hell!"

"HMMMMM... She walked into a resale shop... Is it to sell the necklace...?"

"So it was! How heartless! She's just some money-loving lowlife of a woman!"

"This time is...a second-hand store? Hey...she's going to sell another one of brother's gifts! If it were Yukirin, she'll would treasure those for my entire life!"

"Huh...? She's crying? She's been rubbing her eyes for a while..."

What?

"It's probably because the price she got for it was higher than she expected, and now she's crying tears of joy. That trash woman!"

"Ah, she wasn't looking where she was walking, and now she bumped into some delinquents. Now they're looking for trouble. That's what you get LOL!"

"Her response was pretty rushed, must be that she's emotionally shaken. It doesn't matter when, she's always so self-conceited! If this continues, then it'll probably turn into one of those humiliation sex games scenarios!"

"....."

"Uh oh, that's not good."

"—Huh?"

"W-What is she doing. Hurry up and apologize and then run! S-She's so stubborn! Don't argue back!"

“Aaahhhh, the delinquents dragged her by the shoulder into a small alley—T-This is bad! The other people are just pretending not to notice! Who’s going to save her!”

“Brother! Where are you!? O-Oh, wuahhhhhhh!”

“—That idiot!”

I turned back the way I was headed, pushed through the crowd, and sprinted forward.

“Where are you! Where are you—!”

The second-hand store...should be over there. A nearby alley...alley...

I see them!!

There’s a family-owned second-hand store just away from the street, and there’s a dimly lit alleyway beside that shop. There were three guys who were suspiciously in a circle, and at the center was— —

“What are you guys doinggggggggg!!”

I yelled as I ran over there.

I was up against three guys, so I shouldn’t have acted so rashly, and I could’ve just called the police. My head was cooler than I had expected, but even so, my body would not stop moving.

“What are you three dumbasses doing to my girl! Hurry up and let her go!!”

At that moment, I was so close to giving those delinquents a flying kick, but in the end I couldn’t gather up the courage. There was an old sign in the discarded alleyway, and so I violently —

—Bang!

Kicked it!!

I made a hole!

My kick is really amazing !! Heh, I'm really amazing! That sign's quite rusty, but it's still made of metal after all!

“Ah— — — — —!?”

The three delinquents who were surrounding the shy-looking Misaki were probably scared by my kick right...

“W-What's up with that face!”

“Ah, shit! That face, it looks so scary...!”

“L-L-Let's run! That face is just too scary!”

I...I guess they're probably scared by my kick, and so those three delinquents fled.

My kick is so strong! I guess that's to be expected of my foot! I'm so awesome! Ha ha ha...

“.....”

We're the only ones left in the alley. Ugh, once I had calmed down, my sweat began dripping out. It's so hot.

“Oh.”

At that moment, I noticed what Misaki was holding in her hand—the object in her bag.

“...Children's clothing?”

“Ah...!”

She softly exclaimed.

After selling the necklace, the reason she had gone back was to buy children's clothing. In fact, there was even a small pair of sports shoes. These didn't look like things Misaki would use at all, so that...

—"Misaki-chan's family went through a divorce, and she's really low on money!"

—"Not only that, her younger siblings are still very young..."

"....."

I remembered Hikari Yumesaki's entry. Misaki remained quiet, and she looked away with an embarrassed look. Faintly from her eyes came...

"Erm..."

The truth was, I had a lot of questions, but while I was going to ask her...

No, I probably shouldn't.

I don't even know what was truth, and what were lies.

Although I wanted to confirm each of them, I decided not to. The deceitful demoness would just lie more. I'll just put them aside.

"Senpai...about that..."

She eked out a soft voice.

How should I respond? Just how should Akitsuki Sakamoto respond?

I couldn't think of anything. Therefore I intended to escape. I pulled out the object that was in my pocket, put it on my face, and then —

"Oh, I'm sexy dream, not your Senpai."

I said as I turned my back on her.

"— —Huh?"

Hey, not bad of a response. Sigh, what am I doing.

"E-erm, S-Senpai?"

"I'm not your Senpai, I'm Sexy dream"

"Oh, S-Sexy?"

"That's right, I'm sexy dream. I'm not the same guy as Sakamoto-senpai."

"Oh, huh? B-But— —"

"It is what it is! It's quite embarrassing! Now if you'll excuse me!"

I forcefully shut her up. Ahhh, seriously, what am I doing? I already know how pathetic of a guy I am. How lame of me.

"...Can you pretend that nothing happened?"

"Huh?"

I said to her.

"Just pretend that what happened today didn't happen."

I looked back at her, my face too hot to hide. I slowly rephrased my words.

"I...yesterday's me...really liked being straightforward, loved being fickle, innocent, delicate and sweet, and just really adored — — you. So...when you see me tomorrow, please act like before. Continue acting like the cute little underclassman...Misaki Koudera."

".....!"

"Even though this is fake, don't worry. Even though this is all an act, it doesn't matter. I'll continue to buy things as long as it isn't expensive. I always thought it was weird, that no matter when I went to the café, you would always be working, and I've never seen you take a break. If you need something for your family, I will also help you. So, when you see me tomorrow, even if it's fake, please give him a smile. I understand that you hate me, but I'm quite tolerant. That's why — —"

I don't want to let that idiot, Hikari Yumesaki, have such unbearable memories.

It didn't matter how much Misaki hated me; my life has always been like . However, if Hikari Yumesaki were to be hated by her favorite underclassman, then she would definitely have a lonely look, and if I see that look on her face, I would really suffer. I don't want to see her act tough through a journal entry. As such, the only thing I can do is to be a hero without a cause.

"....."

The speechless Misaki didn't say anything—no, she couldn't say anything, and she was already walking away.

I'm pretty sure her demoness mask had begun to crack, even if only a little.

“See look! It was just as I told you! Misaki-chan is a great person!”

“This...”

Two days later, I opened up the notebook, and glanced through the message left behind by Hikari Yumesaki.

“Yesterday she said, ‘Thank you for always buying those things for me. I’m really sorry. From now on, I’ll hold back a little’! Sakamoto, you’re too selfish! You probably told her some unnecessary things! Don’t make me worry like that!”

Hey, it looks like she’s also energetically berating me today.

“Someone whose heart can’t trust others is such a sad person! As punishment, I ate all of the pudding in the refrigerator! And the watermelon! And the ice cream! My stomach hurts a lot!”

“Yes, yes. Enjoy it while you still can.”

I looked at the sketch under the entry with a wry smile. A picture of Hikari Yumesaki stuffing herself was drawn, with an angry expression on her face.

Two days before, I decided not to write anything in the notebook.

I trusted Misaki to act as she had before. I trusted her to change her attitude.

And the result was — —

It looks like “nothing had ever happened” yesterday. Seeing that ordinary journal entry, I could finally have a relief. Sigh, this is good. I originally thought that something would drastically change.

...But, it looks like not everything had been “undone”.

“You know, I think the feeling that Misaki-chan gives off has changed a little bit? How do I put this. I feel like she’s opened up her heart more than before... Whatever! All that matters is that she’s still cute!”

“Huh?”

I was a little bit surprised as I turned on my cellphone and looked back over yesterday’s message. What I saw was — —

“I’m going to work today, please be sure to visit.”

What? Now this is strange—thinking about that, my gaze moved on to the next message below.

“It’s not like I want to see Senpai or anything, so please don’t misunderstand. It’s just that we made too much ice cream in advance, which is why I asked you to come. It’s not like I want you to eat it, and it’s definitely not because I purposely made too much for an excuse to invite you over, so please don’t misunderstand. Also, my shift changed today, so I can get off at 1:00. It’s not like I wanted to make sure I had enough time to be with Senpai that this happened.”

“.....”

What’s with this message? “It’s not like” has been way overused. Is Misaki actually a tsundere...

H-How is this possible?

As I thought about this, I stupidly smiled and walked out of the house. No, it’s not like I wanted to see her or anything. I’m definitely not a tsundere. That’s right, I’m not like her.

Definitely not like her, I guess.

Tomorrow, I will die.
You will revive. 2

CUT5

今日、俺たちは花火を見上げる。
彼女ははがったことにする。



CUT 5 – Today We Watched the Fireworks, and She Pretended That Nothing Happened

“Let’s unravel the secrets of Sakamoto’! Now, starting from this week, Hikari here will uncover Sakamoto’s secrets step-by-step! Now then, our first question is, ‘Why doesn’t Sakamoto cut his hair!?’ The truth is, he really takes note of his fierce appearance. That’s why — —”

— —Slam

“Again...?”

I turned off that effective alarm and sat up. Dammit, no matter how many times I change the alarm, Hikari Yumesaki would always change it back to this one. Why does she insist on being so infuriating? But I’ll ignore this for now, since something else caught my attention.

“What’s this?”

I had climbed out of my bed, and was opening the curtains when I noticed it.

“A teru teru bozu?”

I stared at the teru teru bozu with the ferocious-looking eyes hanging from the curtain. That hair, and those eyes. No, no, no, the hair is way too long. Besides, there was no need to make that teru teru bozu look so frightening.

“It hasn’t rained much lately. The raining season is also over.”

From a closer look, I realized that there was also a long slip of paper hanging from the hem of the doll. It looks like she was doing another one of those stunts I don't understand.

I gave the teru teru bozu a flick to the head, drew the curtains open, and as the sunlight came in, I opened up the journal only to see the usual lively words written in it, which was enough for me to feel Hikari Yumesaki's cheerfulness.

"Yahoo! I went out and played with Misaki-chan again today! She's still super cute! If I weren't using your body, Sakamoto, I would've already kissed her by now!"

"It looks like she's having fun."

Hikari Yumesaki had her time shortened by five minutes. But looking at her like she is now, it seems as if that huge tantrum had never occurred. The journal only had things about Misaki written in it.

Misaki Yutera, an underclassman a year younger than me, and a part-time waitress at the Café Moonleaf.

Her appearance looks pure and sweet, but she's actually a demoness on the inside. Because of a certain event, our relationship should have deteriorated somewhat...

"Sakamoto, Misaki-chan said that she only had to work the morning shift tomorrow! I've already promised her that we would go out and eat lunch together!"

But as you can see, instead of deteriorating, our relationship has improved to the point where going out together has become a matter of fact. Hikari Yumesaki is probably much happier now to be on such good terms with her favorite underclassman. Her mood has

improved greatly lately, her journal entries are always about Misaki, who hasn't been pulling as many pranks as before.

The thing is, Misaki was a little bit different from before.

"Remember to treat her! Misaki-chan is a good girl, and she's been real nice lately. You should let her experience your gentlemanly side!"

"Real nice huh."

It's almost as if the demoness had disappeared, ever since that day, Misaki had dropped her mask of purity and became more courteous whenever I'm treating her. In the past, she would always be quick to ask me to pamper her, but now she never presses me to spend money on her.

"Senpai, I said that it's okay. You don't have to always pay for me..."

"No, no, it's fine. I have to in a moment like this..."

Just like that, time flew by, and it was the afternoon. We were at a restaurant waiting for our check.

Misaki and I were nudging each other aside in front of the cash register, fighting over the bill. I could even hear the cashier say under her smile, "You two should hurry up." How embarrassing, you should just let it go. Hikari Yumesaki seems to think that I did a lot of unnecessary things, and Misaki's attitude changed, becoming so polite.

"I will interrogate Misaki-chan thoroughly afterwards! If you don't treat her well, then I'll pluck out a thousand strands of your hair!"

She even wrote this ruthless line in the notebook yesterday. A thousand is just way too much. Misaki, please, just listen to me.

“Alright, allow me to pay, please.”

I forced the bill into the cashier’s hands, settling the check. Misaki then scowled with a displeased look. I can’t help it either.

The atmosphere became a little bit awkward, and as I turned my back on the unhappy princess, leaving the restaurant,

“...Hmph, how kind of you. Are you perhaps expecting something? Do you want me to be more flirty with you?”

“I’ve already said that’s not it, really.”

“Then that means you don’t think of me that way? How rude.”

And with those words Misaki turned her head to the side with a pout. This girl is so troublesome.

The pure, sweet maiden from before disappeared completely. Right now, walking beside me with an unhappy face was a cold-hearted underclassman, and her cold eyes matched her current demeanor.

I will probably never see the angelic smile from that day again, and I would be lying if I said I had no lingering thoughts about it, but—

“Huh?”

For some unknown reason, she suddenly grabbed ahold of my right hand, and the two of us began walking next to each other while holding hands. What’s going on?

“This is just a sign of gratitude, gratitude. I’m letting my poor unpopular Senpai experience the joy of holding a girl’s hand. So how does it feel? Is your heart pounding?”

As she said that, she even let out a “Hmph” with a cheeky smile.

Dammit. I knew that I would get laughed at, but my face still became hot. Sigh, looks like the demoness is still alive and well. Although, I could always restrain that evil side of hers.

“...Ah.”

I went back at her by clasping the small hand firmly, even entwining our fingers together. We were holding hands like a couple. See, how’s that?

“Y-You, I give you an inch and you take a mile... Really now, even though you’re so unpopular...”

She was fuming, but the blushing maiden still didn’t remove her hand. I could even faintly feel her palm sweating. Huh, she’s a tsundere after all.

The two of us walked silently under the glaring sun.

At the same time, I was thinking of something else in my mind.

A strange note that I didn’t understand was written at the end of today’s entry.

“If it’s Sakamoto, then it should be fine. Right, I’ll leave it at that.”

No, this message was not as much meant for me, as it is for Hikari Yumesaki herself.

Sigh, just what is she planning to do this time?

“...There’s more of them.”

Among all of the various developments, summer vacation had ended, and it was a certain morning, after the school opening ceremony.

The number of teru teru bozu hanging from the curtains had increased, and while looking at them, I couldn't help but raise some doubts in my mind. What's she trying to do?

Whatever, I'll just look at today's entry for now.

"Pop Quiz, Start!"

"A quiz?"

"Let's find out how diligent Sakamoto was during his summer vacation!"

"What?"

"I've left some questions on the next page, and now you have to answer them! You only have ten minutes!"

"Another one of her weird games huh."

I turned to the next page. Yep, there really are some questions. However,

"Subject: Hikari-chan"

"What's with this Hikari-chan?"

The concerning questions were below:

"Question 1: What is Hikari-chan's favorite food? Method of answering=put the respective item on the desk.

Question 2: What is Hikari-chan's cute point?

Question 3: Please choose from the following list what Hikari-chan's cup size is: 'D, E, F, G, H'

Question 4: Hikari-chan is a very cute girl.

Question 5: Beside Hikari-chan, what is the name of another girl that Sakamoto likes?"

What kind of questions are these?

Question 1 is just that you want to eat candy. Question 4 isn't even a question. I won't even comment on Question 3.

Anyway, I placed the adult BL books that were hidden under the bed on the desk.

2. "Lack of restraint"

3. "D, E, F, G, H A"

4. "A cute girl would never use the word 'virgin.'"

I wrote, only to stop at question 5.

"A girl I like..."

I thought of her reason for asking this kind of roundabout question. Usually, anyone asked by a girl who they like would feel excited. Like, "Oh, so she likes me? Heheheh..." that. But I'm pretty sure that Hikari Yumesaki doesn't mean it that way. Right?

"Whatever."

I'll just quickly write down an answer and leave the rest for tomorrow's me. After that, another day came.

"AAaahh! I was wrong! I'm sorry!"

I tore off all of the photos of Kinoshita that were stuck to the table, and then opened the journal.

“Lack of restraint? Are you praising me?”

“It’s not an A! Don’t try to make a fool out of me!”

“Oh, so you don’t believe that Hikari-chan is cute. Why don’t you go ask Kazeshiro?”

What greeted my eyes were Hikari Yumesaki’s red corrections (?) on my answers. Kazeshiro huh. If I were to ask him, he would definitely give me a serious response, so I’ll leave him alone.

There’s one last problem, the one last reply I was most concerned about was—

“I don’t want to know what type you like, I want a name! There’s probably millions of cheerful, optimistic girls!”

So she wrote.

“Not that I would think so.”

It seems that I won’t be able to convey my feelings to her this way. Even if I do, it’s troubling. However, that wasn’t the real problem here.

Why does she want to know who I like right now?

“What now?”

“How troublesome.”

The number of teru teru bozu hanging from the curtain rod increased further with each passing day, and there was so many that I couldn't open the curtains anymore.

At first, I would take them off since they were a bother, but Hikari Yumesaki threw a tantrum and said, **"Don't take down the teru teru Sakamotos!"** I was left with no choice, and had to leave them hanging.

I bitterly complained, opened up the journal, and saw the first line written in large letters,

"Stupid Sakamoto! Pervert! If you keep on staring at Misaki's thighs, she's going to get mad!"

"Ugh..."

What an unexpected telling off. Now that I think about it, Hikari Yumesaki has been criticizing me a lot lately,

"As a punishment, I deleted your entire secret folder of foot-fetish anime! I want you to reflect on what you've done!"

"WWHHAAATT!? What have you done?"

I hurriedly turned on my computer with desperation, and opened up the folder—

"...Dammit."

At the top of the folder was a text document, and after seeing the title, I apprehensively bit my lip.

"Just kidding☆ Were you worried? Were you worried? Giggle."

Grrr....

In fact, the document read,

“Since you’re hopeless, Hikari-chan here will tell you the secret to looking at thighs without being caught! When you stare at her, pretend to mess with your bangs and you won’t be so easily discovered!”

“...Heh, who would ever do that? How dirty.”

I mean seriously, she’s always writing something so dumbfounding and meddling in other people’s business.

On that day, after school,

“Senpai?”

“What — —!?”

“You’ve been fiddling with your hair for a while now, is something wrong?”

Huh, what? Have I been caught? No, I’m still safe, right?

“I-It’s nothing.”

“Hmm. I see.”

Misaki had a sad look in her eyes on me, but she didn’t push the matter further. Looks like I’m safe.

Hikari Yumesaki wrote in the journal, **“I made another date with Misaki~!”** and so I once again went to Café Moonleaf after school today, waited for Misaki’s shift to end, and went out on a date with her. It was just that the location of our date was quite unexpected.

“Still though, I never thought that you would like coming to the arcade.”

“Hehe, constantly wearing a professional smile at work does build up a lot of stress.”

Misaki replied as she held the joysticks of a fighting game. How frightening. S-She doesn’t mean me does she…?

“Senpai, are you feeling stressed?”

“Huh!?”

S-Stressed?

“If you are — — then why don’t you play a round with Misaki as your opponent?”

She said as she pointed towards the console across from her. Oh, so she meant that. That scared me for a moment.

...Dammit, what’s with that mischievous look of accomplishment on your face? Was it on purpose?

“It’s really stressful. If I act a little kinder, those customers act like they’re my boyfriend. Although thanks to this, I managed to receive a lot of gifts from them.”

“O-Oh...”

I used to also buy her stuff haphazardly, so I didn’t know how to respond to her. Misaki must’ve realized it from the expression on my face because she quietly let out a gasp, and continued talking timidly,

“I-I’ve already stopped doing that though. I was just a little bit carried away, and I won’t do those things ever again...”

"I-It's okay. No worries, you have your own circumstances too."

She seemed to have plenty of her own troubles. Although I can't say that I'll forgive her because of this, I didn't have to be too harsh on her

"...Senpai, you aren't mad about this now?"

"Huh? Oh. I'm not mad at all."

"...T-That's good."

At that moment, Misaki had on a timid look, but she quickly refocused her attention onto the console screen. What was that about? I put that thought aside for now, and looked around the arcade parlor, while secretly snickering to myself.

Misaki soon became engrossed in her game, and I stood behind her, heheh. What a lovely sight. Even though Misaki's personality was a bit like "that", she was still a nice and adorable underclassman, and bringing in a cute underclassman into a place full of guys is such an enjoyable experience! Ahahaha, even when I close my eyes, I can still feel all of the jealous looks surrounding me. In reality, there wasn't even a relationship between Misaki and me, and I couldn't even be called her purse, but no one else knew this private information. Ahahaha, feels great,

"Ah, hmm..."

As I was releasing all of the unwanted virgin power (?) that I had accumulated throughout my life, Misaki let out a tempting sound that made me return my attention towards her.

"Hmm... Ah..."

I looked at the console screen, and saw that she was currently struggling in her battle.

Woah, although I don't know who her opponent is, those tactics are unruly. Using counter-throws and such demonic combos, that play style is almost foul play. Who's the idiot fighting a girl so seriously?

Displeased, I silently craned my head to see who was sitting at the console across. It's probably some unpopular guy who has a nasty-looking face — —

"Huh — — — — — !?"

My back froze. Impossible, I was struck by a spell of dizziness once I saw who it was.

"K-Kasumi..."

Why is she here...?

".....And here I thought that Sakamoto was troubled with something....Who knew that he was just enjoying himself...."

She quietly mumbled something to herself, and that look terrified me from the bottom of my heart. Why is she looking at me like that? Her eyes look as if she discovered something that had destroyed her family, like her husband's mistress...

As I was thinking that, we made eye contact with each other, and I couldn't help but quickly look away. Crap, did she sit at the console facing us because she found Misaki and me... This is really bad...

"Ah..."

At that moment, Misaki was struck by Kasumi's demonic techniques, and lost.

“Tsk... What the...”

Seeing the unyielding look on Misaki’s face, I suddenly felt a sense of apprehension. L-Let’s go for now. You must feel hungry, so let’s find a nice place and eat some sweets — —

“Senpai! Help Misaki take down that opponent!”

The premonition came true — —!!

Wait, wait! Crap, the surrounding looks were stabbing into me. The current atmosphere felt like, “In a situation like this, the boyfriend should coolly take down the opponent. He was proudly showing off just moments ago, so he can’t run away now...”

But I have to run away shamefully from this fight. If I took on this challenge, then the situation would get incredibly worse...

“Senpai~”

As I was planning my retreat.

“If you beat him, then Misaki will let you enjoy all you want today

”

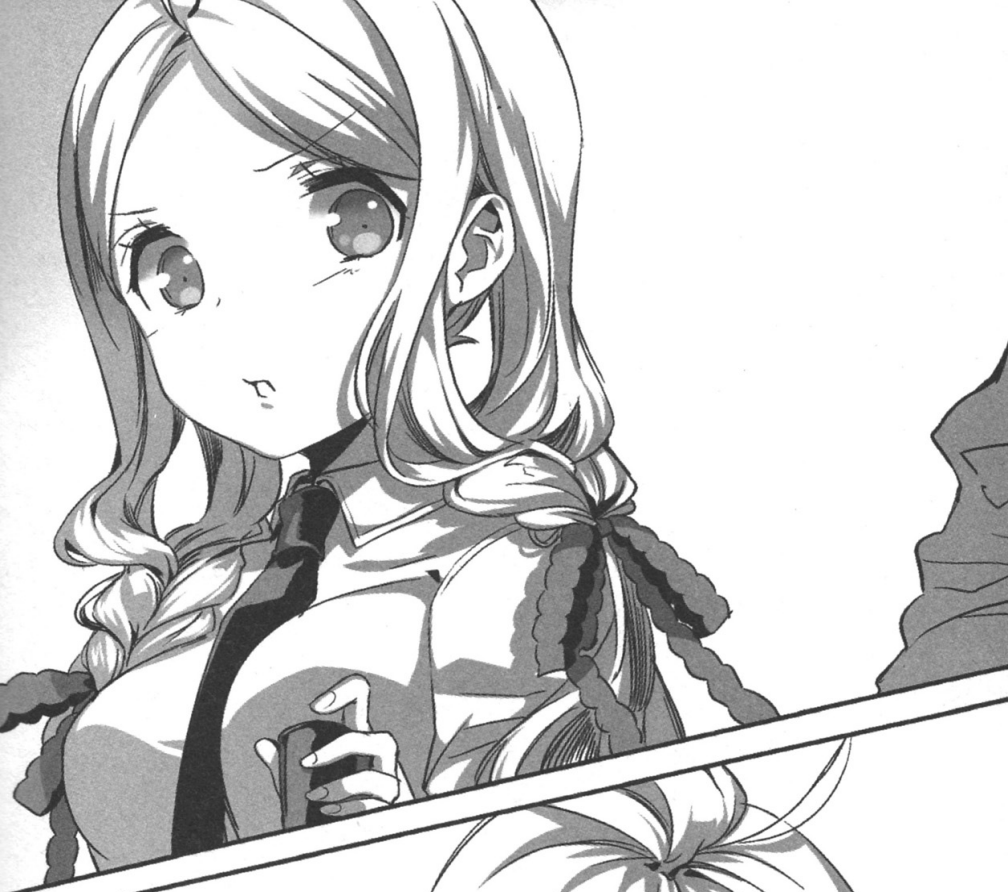
Misaki let out her prettiest professional smile, and hugged me from behind — — Ah, it hurts! Stop it! Why are you using your fingernails to pinch me — — It hurts so much! Are you seriously this stubborn!? I get it! I’ll do it!

I completely lost to Misaki's brutality, taking her chair... Huh? My phone is vibrating. An email? At this timie — —

Bzzz!

"If you lose to me, then you'll have to do ①,②, and ③. Kasumi."

(T/N: I'll be nice and help you guys remember. ① = a kiss, ② = a French kiss, and ③ = Eh? Down there!?)



“.....”

Cold sweat trickled, and the match started — — Ah! Kasumi is blatantly taking it easy on me! It’s so obvious that even Misaki could tell, watching from behind! What do I do!? Do I win or do I lose!?

“Senpai, if you lose...then you know what will happen right?”

“Uh, you see...but...”

“Senpai.”

Misaki said as she pointed her index finger out, and stroked it down my cheek. Ahhhhh..... However, I could hear lots of tongue clicking from the other side.

I tragically faced this dilemma, and my willpower slowly depleted like my HP bar. After much trouble, my choice was — —

“.....I won.....”

Holding ice cream in my hand, I was sitting dejectedly in the lounge room at the arcade. Ahhh, my cellphone has been vibrating for quite some time now, with emails coming one after another, but I didn’t have the courage to read any them. This is bad... It’s too dangerous... When I was leaving I could faintly hear Kasumi saying, “Starting tomorrow, no matter what I have to use...”

“Giggle, thank you very much. Ahh~ I feel so happy right now.”

Misaki let out a cheerful smile as she sat next to me, eating the soft serve ice cream that I bought for her. She had completely put aside

her elegant demeanor, and was dangling her feet back and forth. That's way too lax of her.

"But it's been a long time since I've last came to the arcade with someone. Giggles, two is definitely more fun than one!"

"Did you used to come with a friend?"

"Not really a friend. I would occasionally come here with a very dear person."

— —!

Hearing this unexpected answer, I couldn't help but gulp.

"Someone... dear to you?"

"Yeah, I think I told you about this yesterday too."

I didn't hear about it. Hikari Yumesaki, you should be writing these things down, seriously.

"A very nice person. Although to say love...would be an exaggeration, but for me, that person's irreplaceable. I can still remember when that person used to comb my hair for me."

O-Oh... comb your hair huh...

"We often took photos together, sticking our faces next to each other... Heheh, it was quite embarrassing."

".....Tsk."

...However, even though her personality was a little off, she's still cute anyway. It looks like even she has her complicated past.

I didn't know why but, I felt sad knowing of Misaki's past with another guy. No, there wasn't anything more to that. It was just that I'm a bit depressed...

It'll probably be awkward if I remained silent.

"Senpai, are you taking it personally?"

"Huh?"

I turned my head, only to see Misaki looking at me with a cheeky smile on her face.

"I see, so that's how Senpai sees Misaki... Gigggle."

"N-No, that's not it! Definitely not like that — —!"

"So that's why you come by to the shop everyday."

"Uh....."

T-That's because Hikari Yumesaki's made promises selfishly...

"In fact, yesterday, you complained to the manager, '**You should have the waitresses' skirts be shorter!**', senpai. That's probably the reason too."

That idiot!

"Also, you've said '**Misaki, you should come over to my place next time.**' I mean really, if I were to go to your house, just what would you do to me?"

"Uh..."

You're doing this on purpose now, aren't you...

"Anyway, I do owe you gratitude, senpai, so just work hard ok?"

Misaki smiled in a provocative way. Feeling displeased, I put on a rigid face — —

“Hmph, I would never do such hart work.”

Ah, I bit my tongue! Crap! That’s right, laugh at me!

“Giggle, how hilarious. Oh that’s right, Senpai. Wanna take some commemorative photos together?”

“To commemorate what...”

Although I said that, I reluctantly agreed with a disgruntled look. I’m so soft.

At that moment, a sweet apple scent suddenly came from behind and drew near my ear.

“Ah, and also.”

“Huh?”

“You don’t have to pretend fiddling your hair, senpai. If you want to take a look, then you’re free to do so at anytime.”

“.....!”

“Let’s go, Senpai ♥ ”

The demoness’ whispers made my face sizzle.

Dammit, I’ve been found out!

On another day.

“I got to do my own research!”

It was the second semester, and due to slacking off, my summer homework was still not finished (it was mostly Hikari Yumesaki's fault). I was told off by my teacher two days ago, I directed my anger towards Hikari Yumesaki, ordering her to, "Hurry up and do the homework!" And her response was the above. It seems that she has her own research to do. The thing is.

"Her research probably has nothing to do with the homework."

Then just what is she doing? I really don't understand her.

There was even another notebook on the desk, and written on the front cover was:

"Conquest"

Some kind of strange work again? What are you trying to conquer?

I opened the notebook — —

"Akitsuki Sakamoto: the heroine."

"Heroine!?"

Why are you writing this kind of things!? I'm the heroine!?

Next to the illustration of a character resembling me were large letters,

"Looks like a delinquent, but he's actually just a timid *uke*-type and likes guys."

(T/N: Most of you are probably familiar with yaoi/BL (Boy's Love). Two common terms used in the genre are "uke" and "seme." The uke is "passive" (on the bottom) while the seme is "aggressive/dominant" (on the top). Highly recommend that more research NOT be conducted.)

"Just what is she doing this time..."

"Route Difficulty: E, harsh-looking on the outside but soft and sweet on the inside, so he's quite easy to conquer. His whole body gives off the innocence of a virgin. Always careless. All the gamers calls him 'Bakatsuki'."

Bakatsuki... (T/N: The pun was originally a portmanteau with an insult (Baka means idiot) followed by "月" (tsuki), which is the last character in his first name. Credit goes to Ping for this great choice of reference.)

"However, he's actually really kind, and if you were to tidy up his appearance he would look quite cool. Since he has such a cute personality and yet a cold glare, he has an unshakeable popularity in the gaming room. Rating: ★★★★★"

"....."

Whatever, reading it just confuses me. So, she thinks I'm a five-star huh.

Just as my mood improved, I turned to the next page.

"Yukiko: the little-sister character. Route Difficulty: A. A junior high girl who is slowly learning the joys of being a woman. Although her route difficulty is high, her tsundere-level is unparalleled. Rating: ★★★★★★★"

"Kasumi-chan: the large-breasts character. Route Difficulty: C. A bit quiet and yet perverted maiden. Has a lot of ecchi CG scenes. Rating: ★★★★★★★"

What followed were an 8-star and a 10-star rating. Doesn't that mean that my five-star rating is the lowest!?

“That idiot is really full of herself.”

I continued to noisily flip through the notebook. There was some extensive data written on all of my classmates, and then —

“Misaki-chan: the female underclassman character. Route Difficulty: AAA. An incredibly popular and beautiful maiden. Her alluring way of saying ‘Senpai’ has conquered the souls of countless men. Occasionally she shows her sadistic side, yet she still captures one’s heart. Has a pair of thighs that can get Sakamoto addicted to foot femdom anime. Godly! Rating: ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★.”

“What a high recommendation.”

Twenty-stars huh.

What’s she doing. I remembered something from the past, probably something like this had happened before Kasumi-chan’s confession. That idiot purposely try to push me and Kasumi-chan together. But what happened in the end....

“.....”

Hikari Yumesaki should have reflected about that, and she knows that I have a crush. Even so, she is still doing it again right now. Does she think that I have a crush on Misaki?

“What’s going on?”

On that day, after school.

Hikari Yumesaki always sends Misaki a message saying, **"I'll come see you tomorrow too!"**, and so, I came to Café Moonleaf. There's quite a lot of people here too.

"He's here again, that loitering bastard."

"At least I'm an actual customer."

I answered the depressing greetings with a sigh. However, isn't this basically how we always greet each other?

"...Huh?"

Just as I was about to open the menu, I noticed that she had focused her attention on my hand.

"A ring huh, you don't see that quite often."

"Huh? Oh, this?"

I stared blankly at her for a few seconds before I could respond back. She was talking about the ring that I was wearing on my right middle finger. (T/N: No, I don't know why it's his middle finger and not the ring finger. Maybe mistranslation from JP to CN.)

(E/N: Original had it as middle finger. Yeah, I gave up on erasing the translation notes myself...)

It was the weird ring that Hikari Yumesaki bought online. It's really embarrassing to wear such a weird thing, so I had specifically written a rule to only wear it at home. However I had forgotten to take it off before I stepped outside.

"A friend gave this to me. It was a bit expensive."

"A friend?"

Yeah, a friend.

“.....” “.....”

Huh?

“.....Hmph.”

Hey, w-what’s wrong...? Why did you chortle?

Under the strange atmosphere surrounding us, I nonchalantly wasted time. Once it reached nightfall.

As I was escorting her and her pouting face home.

“Do you have anyone you like, senpai?”

“Wah?”

This question was way too sudden, and I couldn’t help but let out a weird sound.

“You have someone you like, right? What do you wish to do with that person?”

She concluded before I could answer, and even added another question. What are you doing?

“About that...”

Looking at this atmosphere, it appeared I couldn’t run away. What would I want to do...

“.....pet her head?”

“Pet her head? That’s it?”

Yeah, to pet the head of the girl that I like. Isn’t that enough?

“Besides that, what else is there?”

“Errm...besides that...hugging her tightly from behind?”

“.....”

Hey, what is it? Why aren't you saying anything?

“Hmph.”

She chortled again, dammit.

I couldn't help but scrunch my face, but Misaki, who was standing in front of me and playing with her hair, didn't seem to care about my reaction. Her sweet, charming scent and her long eyelashes deeply captivated me.

“Hm~mph. I can understand your feelings, senpai. There was a time, when I too wanted to do those things with the person I like. It was a childish thought though.”

“Childish...”

“But Senpai, it's better not to have this kind of fantasy. Because once that dream breaks apart, the aftermath really hurts...”

Saying that, she quietly looked down with a forlorn look.

This kind of atmosphere is really surprising. Has a girl this cute actually been dumped before? She's probably talking about the same guy from before, the one she took photo with at the arcade. Just how up there are his standards?

“Hey, Senpai.”

“Yeah?”

“There's going to be a fireworks show this Sunday. Do you want to make one last memory of this summer with me?”

Sunday, today's Monday. Let me think...that day will be me.

"No problem, but why?"

"Giggle, questioning a girl's invitation won't help you lose your virginity you know."

Ok then.....

"Oh well, I'm looking forward to it."

As she said that, she turned her back towards the sunset, while letting out a small impish grin.

This expression seemed a bit forlorn, but that must just be my imagination.

"Survey time!"

"Haa."

It was a different other day. This is what the journal read today:

"It's been five months since we've begun switching personalities. And so right here we'll conduct a satisfaction survey for the guest."

"Satisfaction?"

"Please answer the following questions:

- ① It is fun to be with Hikari-chan.**
- ② Hikari-chan is very cute.**
- ③ Meeting Hikari-chan is a great thing.**
- ④ Hikari-chan is actually my long-lost older sister! (What!?)**
- ⑤ I really want to see Misaki-chan.**

...Please answer all of the questions."

"Another of those things I don't understand."

She had prepared **"Completely agree/Agree/Somewhat/Disagree/Completely disagree"** as answers for all of the questions, The first thing that came to my mind was: is there a rule that I need to be an idiot when answering the fourth question?

However, the problem was — —

"Is she trying to pull another fast one?"

Clearly, question five was the real question that she wanted to ask. She was probably trying to sneakily probe in, but her method was way too sloppy.

And so, I answered "Somewhat" for all of the questions. Two days later,

"What do you mean 'Somewhat' for everything!? Is exchanging diaries with cute Hikari-chan that boring!?" Hikari Yumesaki seems pretty angry. It looks like my definition of cute and that idiot's definition are worlds apart, which only makes it more annoying.

Although, looking at her words above, it seems that she's really afraid of being alone.

"...Sakamoto, is it really only 'somewhat?'"

Written in small print in the corner of the journal was this. Sigh, I can't take it anymore, I'm sorry. It was just a joke, you're making me blush, just understand where I'm coming from for a bit. So please don't write these lonely words. However, the most important part was the sentence that came after.

"Misaki-chan is also somewhat?"

"...That idiot, so that's why."

"Sakamoto, you still haven't given up on your crush, have you."

Two days later, on the morning of the day when I had arranged to go to the fireworks show with Misaki. Just as expected.

Before, she would always try to probe in roundabout way, but now she's finally throwing throwing fastballs.

Two days ago, I left the word **"SOMEWHAT!"** in big letters in the journal. I even purposely added an exclamation mark in the hope that she would play it off as sarcasm instead of treating it seriously again. However, it looks like she didn't grasp my hope.

"Misaki-chan is a very good girl. Going out with her will surely bring you happiness."

Hikari Yumesaki's handwriting had become incredibly more deliberate and neater than before. Whenever that idiot is writing seriously, her words always become neater. The thing is, I don't really like this style of writing. That's because I feel like I can see that idiot letting out a side of her that I usually never see.

"Is your crush so much better that you are willing to give up on Misaki-chan? Even if you may never go out with her, you still won't give up? Is it someone I know?"

"...Definitely."

Hikari Yumesaki's definitely trying to hook me up with Misaki. Even after what happened with Kasumi, even though she knows I won't give up on the girl that I like, she still doing it again.

Why? Why does she want to hook me up with Misaki so badly?

Hikari Yumesaki's actions was impossible to understand, and she even left a question at the end.

"Do you really...like that girl that much?"

"...I..."

I couldn't think of an answer, and I closed the notebook without writing anything.

I'm such a sleazy guy. But I'm not happy about it either.

Even though I don't know her reasons, Hikari Yumesaki really wants me to go out with Misaki.

This made me feel incomparably reluctant and miserable — —

That night, it was finally time for the fireworks. Misaki seemed a little elated herself.

She showed up to the meeting place in a yukata, looking much more mature than usual. Her pearly white neck, usually hidden, exposed her charm, and I couldn't help but blush. She looked at me with an impish grin, and gave me some calm.

After we exchanged some dull greetings, we began to roam through the festival stalls. She talked more than usual when she had some takoyaki. In comparison, I didn't say anything at all.

As the fireworks burst in the night sky.

“ — — It was the same last year.”

She suddenly said.

“It was just like this last year too, being here with the person dear to me. Walking around the festival together, eating candied apples together. Standing shoulder to shoulder, watching the fireworks.”

“...Eh. Isn't that youth?”

I didn't know if I should talk with her about her old boyfriend, and so I just casually replied. When Misaki heard it, she cheerfully smiled.

“Giggle, you can't hide your jealousy huh, senpai?”

“Umm....”

Seeing my flustered look, she could not resist letting out an impish giggle, and pulled out from her purse, the same color as her yukata, a small mirror. A large photo sticker was subtly stuck onto the mirror. (T/N: By photo stickers, I mean stickers with actual photos on them (think Oreimo *cringe).) (E/N: Here, have some bleach to drink. And with that, we welcome a new translator.)

“Relax. I wanted to see your reaction, senpai, so I only pretended that I had a guy I liked. I'll be worried if you keep on taking it the wrong way. Here, look at this.”

“Huh?”

I couldn't understand the meaning behind her words, but still looked at the mirror in her hands. Just what — —

“...What...?”

Eh? This — —

“This is the person...you admire...”

Why would she say those kinds of things.

Perhaps I should have thought a bit more on what those words mean.

“Yes, she is the person dear to me — — Hikari Yumesaki.”



Misaki softly spoke her name.

I looked over the sticker on the mirror again. There was no doubt, that standing next to Misaki with a perfect smile on her face, was Hikari Yumesaki.

Huh? W-Why? Why is she in Misaki's photo — —

"She's a pretty strange person. The first time I met her was probably a year ago, when she came to eat at Café Moonleaf. She broke some of the plates, but she also bothered the other guests with her loud noise. My first impression of her wasn't very nice."

Misaki softly delivered her sentences, as if she were reciting very delicate memories.

"There was also the time when she was at the register but didn't have enough money. What do you think she did? She suddenly took a picture of herself and said, **'Selling a celebrity photo of Hikari-chan's KISS face for 520 yen! How about it!?'** At that time, I really wondered just how reckless she was." (T/N: \$1 = 100 yen, so 520 yen = \$5.20 (€4.56))

.....

"Another time, I was harassed by a customer who was hard to deal with. I impatiently tried to refuse the customer, and then he immediately began using foul language... In that moment, Hikari Yumesaki suddenly ordered two slices of cake, saying that she was holding a birthday party for me... Even though it wasn't my birthday."

...I think I had a similar experience.

"I was very happy. Knowing that there was still a person this nice in the world, I was really happy. Ever since that day, I became much closer to her. When I get off from work, I would occasionally go hang out with her. In that time, I chatted a lot with her, like my parents' situation, and my younger siblings. No matter how painful the subject was, she would always listen to me thoughtfully. I really was happy. Slowly, I too wanted to become stronger, just like her, no matter how painful things got, to have a smile on my face, I wanted to be like that — —"

Misaki stopped talking, let out a sigh, and her body began to shiver. She remained silent, trying to hide her discomfort.

But, I — —

"...What happened to her?"

Asked.

Even though I knew the answer.

"...She transferred schools. Some other day, and went far away."

.....

Misaki probably already knew, she can't not know. Even if she became much stronger, she was the only person left in this cruel world, and she would be crying in some corner I'm unaware of, because of how this story ends. She's a fragile one.

"...Is that so."

I see. So that's how it was.

Everything finally makes sense. I thought it was unusual. Why didn't I notice?

The reason why Hikari Yumesaki cared so much about Misaki.

The reason why Hikari Yumesaki wanted me to go out with Misaki.

The reason why Hikari Yumesaki was hiding everything.

Hikari Yumesaki and Misaki Koudera's. Their encounter, relationship, bonds, the truth.

"More importantly, I need to come up with something."

Some time ago, when Hikari Yumesaki was having outbursts over her time loss of five minutes, she wrote this in the diary. At that time, I didn't think too much of it, not noticing that it was the biggest hint.

"Moving on, since it's my hard-earned summer, I can play all I want! Today, I went to one of my favorite places and ate parfait. I haven't had moonleaf parfait in so long, it's absolutely the best★!"

Before that sentence, she even mentioned this. Visiting Café Moonleaf again. It only takes one guess.

That time, I thought that Hikari Yumesaki was just doing everything she wanted before she died. Finding a cute underclassman, spending money and playing around. I only thought that she had given up on life. But as it turns out, that wasn't true.

That idiot already knew Misaki. After going to Café Moonleaf again, she saw Misaki. She was probably worried about her underclassman's wellbeing. Using my body to talk with Misaki would be difficult, so she pretended to have given up on herself, while simultaneously get closer with Misaki. Since she knew about

Misaki's situation, no matter what Misaki asked her to buy, she would always do so with a smile. She even pretended to have just learned of Misaki's household situation, but even so I was too dense.

She didn't tell me about her relationship with Misaki probably out of consideration. She rarely ever talks about what happened in her life, probably because she doesn't want me to think that she has any remorse.

"Senpai, what's wrong?"

"Ah, it's nothing. I'm sorry. So it was like that huh, she transferred schools huh."

"Yeah... Maybe this will sound like an excuse, but I really hope to find someone who will spoil me. When Yumesaki left, well, I felt as if a hole opened up in my heart. My life's back to how it was before I met her, but every day just felt so dull, nothing exciting... That's why I played with the boys who approached me by pretending to like them, to indulge them, and let them feel popular. I thought that doing so would let me fill in the emptiness in my heart, even just a little — But, even then, every night I still felt alone..."

"....."

Hikari Yumesaki's also probably aware of this, that Misaki felt distraught by her death, and that a hole had been left in her heart. Maybe it was when she had finally visited Café Moonleaf after several months, and saw how lonely Misaki was, that she had to try and do something for her.

She couldn't leave Misaki alone. She wanted Misaki to be happy.

She hoped her beloved underclassman could find happiness, so she went ahead and thought of a plan to make Misaki happy. The final conclusion that she came to was — — me.

She believed that I would definitely be able to bring Misaki happiness.

As such, ignoring what happened with Kasumi, she wanted me to hook up with Misaki. She didn't even care who it was that I liked and pushed me to give up.

Even though the situation has progressed this far, she still wouldn't tell me the truth... she probably didn't want me to feel pity for Misaki. Maybe she hoped that I'll truly like Misaki, and bring her happiness.

That idiot hasn't give up on life yet. When she found out about the five minutes reduction, she thought her personality might disappear, so she wanted to leave no regrets behind. She planned to use her remaining time on her favorite people, and not for herself. That idiot was kindhearted until the very end.

Thinking more just made me sigh more, so much that my sighs could cover the entire world.

Hikari Yumesaki's still on this earth. This plan would make more people happy than I thought — — while also letting one person feel unhappy. (E/N: Title of this series can be named as 'Hikari ga Chikyuu ni Itakoro.....')

"Giggle, I'm so stupid. I always thought I wasn't strong. I've already forgotten about the moments I had with Yumesaki, and even pretended that those moments don't exist, but yet I still couldn't get rid of loneliness in my heart. Honestly, I don't think

that I'll ever defeat that pain. This loneliness will always be with me. But the thing is, Senpai."

Suddenly, the whole world fell silent.

Everyone raised their heads to gaze at the night sky.

"Now — — I have Senpai with me."

The booming of the exploding fireworks resounded through my heart.

Blue, green, and red — —

The vibrant glimmers added intense, bright colors to the cute pair of eyes staring right at me. The beautiful fireworks unceasingly burst, as if they wanted to melt off her mask.

The smile illuminated under the light appeared unimaginably gentle—

"Senpai."

She pointed her finger.

It was pointing at a certain festival stall in the corner. There's a bunch of weird looking accessories at the stall, and right in front of the vendor, looking up at the fireworks, was a prismatic ring.

"Will you buy me...that?"

What does she mean by that.

She's probably teasing me again. Or maybe she's blackmailing me. Or maybe — —

No one knew the answer. Maybe Hikari Yumesaki knows. But, I couldn't possibly hear her voice.

That's why, I— —

"Can't. I didn't bring enough money."

I replied in a joking manner, and smiled.

I believed that she couldn't hear my little voice crack.

I believed that her trembling gasp was a hallucination caused by the sound of the fireworks.

"...I guess not...after all..."

I couldn't respond, and this was probably the definite answer.

Looking as if she was worried about the tormented look on my face, she took a deep a breath, and put on a mischievous look.

"...Giggle, how unfortunate. I had planned on using Senpai's money to buy my little sister a ring."

"Sorry about that. You should try asking your manager for a raise."

I continued smiling, using my frivolous smile to pass by. Misaki turned her back towards me, and asked,

"Senpai, what's your crush like?"

"Huh?"

"The one that you want to pet her head, to hug her tightly from behind, tell me about her."

She didn't turn her head, nor did she open her mouth again.

What is she like, huh...

"She's a happy-go-lucky idiot."

I said the first thing that came to my mind.

"She really is such a happy-go-lucky person, always giggling as she pulls stupid pranks. She's a downright idiot, a moron who never considers anything. Always giving me trouble...always mocking my virginity, even calling me things like 'Bakatsuki.'"

Misaki didn't say anything, keeping her back to me.

"But — —"

I suddenly dropped my shoulders, and spoke my true thoughts.

"She's very kind. At first glance, not only does she look like she can trespass into your heart, but also an idiot who would dance with a hula hoop on your desk, yet she really is kind. Kind enough that even when she is stuck in a bad situation herself, she will first consider others. That's why I, that's why I — —"

The truth is that she's a crybaby, a kind but fragile girl, a coward who wants to become stronger.

I want to protect her more than anyone else...

"Senpai."

"Huh?"

Pah

"Ow!"

"I didn't ask you to tell me this much."

Misaki softly flicked my forehead, and looked at me face to face, wearing her usual playful smile.

As she giggled, the pure sound of her laugh makes one feel relaxed.

After she finished giggling by herself — —

“Senpai, please pretend that nothing happened.”

Using a professional smile, she opened her bright lips and spoke.

“I want Senpai to continue acting as a fool, easy to be tricked by me, and yet a cute and reliable senpai. The Senpai that I usually see. So...just pretend that you never saw the weak side of me today.”

Pretend that nothing happened.

I’ve once heard — — once said that phrase before.

This kind of phrase is much too lonesome. But, let’s just go with it.

“Ok. Starting tomorrow, show me some mercy too alright.”

Ok, she softly nodded her head, and continued to wear a pure smile.

“.....regret.”

I felt as if that sound came from somewhere under her smile.

“I don’t think that I’ll ever have a day of regret.”

“Huh — — ?”

She took a step back, turned around, and the fireworks illuminated her face once again.

“Am I the Misaki that you expected today, Senpai?”

“...!”

“Well, let’s just stop here for tonight. Goodbye.”

After saying that, she disappeared into the crowd.

That sight of her petite back, like the fireworks fading in the night sky, gradually disappeared from my sight.

“So that’s what happened huh. So Misaki has someone in her class that she likes huh. I wanted her to be your girlfriend you know.”

Two days after the fireworks show, I opened up the notebook, and saw this journal entry.

In the end, I didn’t write about what happened during the fireworks show that day, and lied, “I was talking with Misaki when I heard that she liked someone in her class. I encouraged her and told her to go out with that guy, to earn her own happiness.” I had to in order to pretend that nothing had happened. As such, Hikari Yumesaki won’t have to worry about it anymore.

“She always looked so lonely, but I probably just imagined it. Yeah, it’s good to have someone that you like! I can finally rest easy! Hikari-chan can rest easy!”

“Rest easy, huh.”

Seeing as how Hikari Yumesaki had resolved the conflict in her heart, I could rest easy too.

“There shouldn’t be anymore problems now.”

I said to myself as I closed the notebook. Pah — — this sound reminded me of the booming of the fireworks.

A summer night, a fleeting memory, a moment that, like the fireworks, never seemed to have happened.

That glowing time of radiance neither remained in anyone’s memories, nor could it ever remain.

I felt the memento stuck to the corner of the desk, a picture taken with Hikari Yumesaki, stretched a bit and then walked out of my room. There's no point in being so down all the time. And so, let's go make breakfast for now.

"It must be fall already."

A morning chill could already be felt. I muttered softly to myself as I walked to my room.

There were all kinds of events, some that felt too surreal. Well, even then, this was by far the most unforgettable summer break. Yeah, it was pretty fun, and it was all thanks to Hikari Yumesaki.

As I thought that, I walked towards the kitchen.

— —However.

I had forgotten something at that time.

".....Wha.....!"

A few days later, Hikari Yumesaki was trying to beat a galgame through the night again, and when I checked the time as I switched over in the early morning, the whole world stood still.

"Four...twenty-nine..."

I had forgotten.

The dread I felt when Hikari Yumesaki had her time reduced.

"How can this be..."

As well as the fact that Hikari Yumesaki lived in a cruel world.

Tomorrow, I will die.
You will revive. 2

CUT6

明日、俺は死ぬ。
君はただいまを言う。



CUT 6 – Tomorrow I Will Die, You Will Say, “I’m Home”

“I’m sorry. I’m still really scared. Please, don’t say anything to Mama.”

“You’re still scared huh...”

It was already halfway through September. The amount of rain had increased, announcing the coming of fall.

On this day, I was biting my lips as I sat in front of the open notebook.

Two days before, I discovered that Hikari Yumesaki’s time limit was cut down by thirty minutes. I couldn’t help worrying, but all I could do was feel anxious, and I couldn’t come up with any ideas. After racking my brain for a while, I decided that I would just write about the current situation as it is into the notebook. At the same time, I also included this:

“We should probably tell everything to Ms. Hinako. We should tell her everything; that you’re still alive, the reason behind your death, and that your time left was reduced by thirty minutes. We can’t fix anything, at least she can still help by supporting us. In fact, she still thinks that you committed suicide. It’s time to fix this misunderstanding.”

Ms. Hinako, Hikari Yumesaki’s mother.

The truth is, I’ve written many similar journal entries over the summer. But for some reason, Hikari Yumesaki was afraid, and as time passed by, she never visited Ms. Hinako. I mean really, just what are you so afraid of? Although it’ll take a lot of work to get

Ms. Hinako to believe us, Kazeshiro already believes us, so if we just talk it out, Ms. Hinako will most likely understand too.

“Please. I’ll definitely go see Mama eventually, but please just give me some more time. In fact, I’m fine! It’s just thirty minutes! I’ll just treat these thirty minutes as gift to Sakamoto so he can have more time for studying, and if I think about it like this, then there’s nothing to worry about!”

“Still acting brave huh.”

Seeing the journal entry, it looks like she’s still pretty energetic, but no matter how I think about it, this is probably all an act.

Even I was agitated, when I learned of this two days ago. If I could, I would definitely try to find someone who I could vent out all of my anxieties and frustrations. We were already spending restless days together, so why this too?

I couldn’t help but throw a tantrum, even though that wouldn’t solve anything.

I quickly called up Kazeshiro, and once again, we went around trying to solve the problem. Despite this, we didn’t have the slightest clue of where to look. Hikari Yumesaki must have felt our sense of unease, and that’s why she’s purposely pretending to be energetic in her journal entry.

“The thing is, the time problem...”

From five minutes to thirty minutes, Hikari Yumesaki’s time was constantly being reduced. Although I don’t want to think about it, if her time continues to be reduced, Hikari Yumesaki could completely disappear after some time. Can that idiot really endure this kind of situation? Not only her, can I endure it too?

We didn't find any clues, or any solutions. Although I don't want to think too much about it, I think it's time that we accept reality. We also shouldn't go too far in thinking about what might happen.

Because of this, I wanted to let her apologize to Ms. Hinako directly. To apologize for her death, and for not seeing Ms. Hinako, hoping that she would spend her remaining time with Ms. Hinako. This wasn't just for Hikari Yumesaki, but it was also the best course of action for Ms. Hinako. The problem was that Hikari Yumesaki is really hesitant right now. As such, I once asked her if I could go see Ms. Hinako in her place, and then...

"Well good night, Sakamoto....I know that I've already said this so many times, but please keep this a secret from Mama. I'll definitely go see her one day. I'm fine."

"Are you sure...?"

The journal entry ended with this line. Since she said so, there was no choice left.

"But still, I need to think of something."

I raised the notebook towards the morning sun, and could faintly make out erased traces of pencil marks. And when I traced out the marks— —

"So lonely."

Written there were these words.

Lonely. Lonely huh? Losing five minutes was nothing, but now thirty minutes was reduced.

"In fact— —"

It was during the incident with Misaki when I was reminded that Hikari Yumesaki was dead. She was treated as dead by everyone. Nobody, absolutely nobody, will call her name. No matter how loud she yells, there is only a guy named Akitsuki Sakamoto standing here. Nobody recognized Hikari Yumesaki's, and she basically didn't exist in this world. Even if an hour, or even two hours, was taken away from her remaining time, and in the end she disappeared...The world would remain the same. So for her, she probably felt lonely in this kind of world. However, there are a few people who could cure her loneliness — like Ms. Hinako, but..."

"I got to do something..."

I couldn't understand why Hikari Yumesaki was so hesitant to see her own mother.

But if there was an opportunity...

If there was an opportunity for Hikari Yumesaki to overcome her fear, to reunite with her mom, then she'll definitely go see Ms. Hinako personally. I'd better come up with a plan, no matter what I have to do.

After deciding on my goal, I changed my clothes, and headed out under the cloudy sky.

Ah, it's hot even though it was cloudy. How depressing.

I roamed as though I was lost at the crosswalks of life, and took a long route towards the watermelon field near the path from school. I was lost, but what I had to do in the end of important.. Aimlessly wandering around is one of life's pleasures; As for what I want to

say? I wasn't too sure either. The uneasiness in my heart was already muddling with my head.

Before long, I was standing in front of the intercom at the Yumesakis' home, my heart filled with dread.

What so I say to Ms. Hinako anyway? I was looking for Ms. Hinako so that I could change Hikari Yumesaki's feelings, but will the awkward me be able to find that excuse?

I hesitated outside the door for a long time.

I'll probably screw things up. The people passing by, who see me standing in front of the house with a conflicted look on my face, are all giving me a surprised look. In fact, the number of onlookers was continuing to increase— —Ah, not good! The onlookers are whispering. Hey, stop! Who are you going to call!?

"I have no choice, I'll just have to bite the bullet."

I took a deep breath, and rang the doorbell.

— —Ding dong.....

"Com~ing☆I'll be right there~~~"

"Wait, what?"

Before the doorbell finished ringing, a voice had already answered back. What the crap? That's was way too fast.

I had such a thought as the sliding door entrance slid open with a rattling sound. Standing behind the door was Ms. Hinako, her young and pretty looks that would never lead one to think that she had a daughter in high school.

“Teehee, I was wondering who it was, and it turns out to be Sakamoto! Wel~come!”

“H-Hello, aunty.”

“Please come in~. There there, hurry up and come in! The trick to enacting an afternoon drama is to not let anyone else find out!”

“W-What are you saying, aunty!?”

Ms. Hinako giggled at my panicked expression. Sigh, she’s just as always, so energetic. Although I don’t quite understand how she was so cheerful.

But never mind my doubts. Ms. Hinako took me into the living room, and then busily ran out, quickly returning with a ripened watermelon.

A watermelon that was cut in half, and even some spoons.

Woah, are we going to eat all of that?

“Ah, not good, I have to make some tea.”

As she said that, she quickly stepped out of the living room once again. Why do I feel like this hectic appearance was similar to how Hikari Yumesaki would have acted, even though I’ve never met her before?

While I zoned out, a small, black cat with gray eyes came from behind the sliding door, inspected my face, and then walked to my side. If I remember correctly, this cat was named Adam. Some name that is.

“.....Huh?”

Now that I finally met Adam, I couldn't help but rub his neck and tease him. Suddenly, I had a strange feeling course through my mind, and I looked up to check my surroundings.

What's with this feeling. It feels unusual.

The living room looked more empty than the last time I visited. There were less things, as if they had been put away —

"Sorry for the long wait. Here."

"Oh, thank you."

— While I was looking around, Ms. Hinako came back again holding a tray, breaking my stream of thoughts. She sat across from me, and poured me a cup of barley tea. Iced, great.

"Playing with Adam? He's really cute right?"

"Yeah, but I don't really get his name."

"Teehee, that's the name of my favorite band's lead singer. The band's name is 'Eden'. They've been appearing on TV a lot recently, right?"

Ms. Hinako said with a smile. So that's how this weird name came about. It's quite a surprise, seeing how Ms. Hinako was so trendy.

"Leaving that aside, how's the watermelon?"

"Yeah, it's delicious."

"Can you finish all of it?"

"Uh, sure. I'll try my best."

I should be able to finish it all if I try. Besides, it'll be embarrassing if there are leftovers.

“Teehee, I couldn’t help but remember when Hikari-chan was still alive. Every time I asked her, ‘How much watermelon do you want?’ she would always energetically reply, ‘One half!’”

“Oh... R-Really?”

Ms. Hinako suddenly brought up a topic I had difficulty talking about.

“There’s plenty left. Keep eating..”

“Oh, ok.”

Ms. Hinako continued to eagerly talk with me as I ate the watermelon. How should I go about bringing up the topic later on? What kind of opportunity will make Hikari Yumesaki start to talk to Ms. Hinako...um...

I tried to come up with something, but not the slightest idea came up. In that moment, Ms. Hinako spoke directly to me again.

“You’re such a reliable person, Akitsuki. It’s fine for you to come by and play again.”

“There’s no need, I’m not a kid anymore.”

“What are you saying, aren’t high school students still kids? Huhu, still trying to keep your pride.”

“Uh...”

Seeing my response, Ms. Hinako could only smile. So it looks like I’m still just a kid to you huh.

Even though I’m the eldest child in my family, and I have to take care of my little sister and be partners with that idiot —

“Don’t be afraid to ask me for help, okay?”

“Huh?”

Suddenly, her young and bubbly voice enveloped the table, filled with warmth and sympathy.

“You’re still just a child, so you don’t have to go on a wild goose chase by yourself. It’s alright to ask others for help. In fact, it’s not just children, even adults can’t live without help from others.”

W-What is she suddenly saying? What’s the point of this?

“That’s why.”

She paused for a moment, and then proceeded to say — —

“If there’s something troubling you, then talk about it. I could see it from here you know. You came to the watermelon field several times over the summer, and hesitantly walked back and forth, right?”

“Hmm — —?”

Walked back and forth...in the watermelon field?

What happened? Hold on, I don’t remember doing any of this.

“You’re always flipping through your notebook and staring at it, right? I could see it through the window. You were holding it tightly, muttering something. Huhu, what kind of magical spells are in there?”

— — — — —!

That idiot... I pictured the scene that Ms. Hinako described in my mind. and gulped. So that’s how it was.

It looks like I misunderstood. I thought that idiot — — Hikari Yumesaki — — was always too scared, and didn't do anything. I had felt like she was pathetic and spineless, like she was just afraid.

But in reality, that wasn't true. It looks like she was trying her best when I wasn't aware of it, trying to come see Ms. Hinako. Just one step, she was missing that one final step of courage.

"That's why I was really happy when I saw you come over today. Hoho, you finally mustered up the courage. There's something that you want to say to me, right?"

"Ah, no. Not anymore. Today was already — —"

"Oh is that so, what a shame..."

Although her voice carried a sense of sadness, she didn't ask any further, and instead smiled towards me.

So that's why, I was wondering how she could answer the door so quickly, and it turns out that she was waiting for me. That's why she was so cheerful, so overjoyed.

"What the crap... so you were trying your best huh."

So Hikari Yumesaki was actually trying to rely on her own strength to come here, and upon learning this, I couldn't help but let out a snicker.

Although I didn't accomplish anything by coming here, knowing that Hikari Yumesaki had this kind of feeling was already a huge gain. The reason why she repeatedly told me not to say anything turned out to be that she wanted to tell Ms. Hinako herself. Really now, I've come all this way, but I guess just seeing Ms. Hinako will do. Still though, this was very much like her way of doing things.

This knowledge allowed me to relieve my worries. After taking a deep breath, the tension in my shoulders also loosened, and I raised my head towards the ceiling — —

“...That’s right.”

“Hmm? What is it, Akitsuki?”

Suddenly, a thought ran through my mind.

“A picture...”

“Hmm?”

“Can I see a picture of Hikari for a second?”

I asked Ms. Hinako.

Last time I was here, she once let me see a photo album of Hikari Yumesaki growing up. I remembered that there was picture in there of Hikari Yumesaki and Ms. Hinako together. I can’t say for sure that the picture will be enough of a reason, but if there was a moment of love and amity taken in that picture, then perhaps it will touch Hikari Yumesaki, spurring her to go see Ms. Hinako.

“Excuse me, give me a moment.”

This may help us fix the current situation, even if just by a little bit. I held onto my hope, and bowed my head towards Ms. Hinako in a pleading manner.

“Ah...about that...”

“Ms. Hinako?”

— —However.

Ms. Hinako’s response was shaky and hesitant.

“Ms. Hinako?”

She weakly put on a smile, and a shadow fell upon her face. And from those heavy lips, what she said was —

“I’m sorry, that photo album is no longer here.”

“———Huh?”

Her unexpected reply made me draw back my breath.

“That album is no longer here...”

Not here...

No no no, what are you talking about? That can’t be true.

You clearly cherished that album so much, so how did it disappear?
Y-You’re kidding right? You’re teasing me right?

“.....Did something happen?”

“.....”

Ms. Hinako didn’t respond, but I couldn’t just leave it at that.

It was probably because she felt that we couldn’t go on with such ambiguity, but she put on a slight smile, and raised her head.

“...That child’s father.”

Father? I remember Hikari Yumesaki saying that her parents were divorced —

“Ever since the funeral, he’s always been causing quite a ruckus. During the time that he was home, he even yelled quite furiously at me. Saying that Hikari-chan’s death was all my fault.”

——Oh.

“At that time...the photo album, and everything that contained memories of Hikari-chan was taken away by him.”

“———!”

I gasped. No matter how I looked at it, I could only feel sadness coming from Ms. Hinako’s smile. Seeing Ms. Hinako in such a state, my mind fell into disorder, the trapped air burning my lungs. If what she said was true...

When I looked around, I had felt like this room was unusually empty.

The certificate that was adorned on a plaque, and the drawing that was taped to the wall.

Perhaps, everything that was left from when Hikari Yumesaki was still alive...was all...

I thought of the journal entry from before, where Hikari Yumesaki talked about how hard it was to live with divorced parents.

That father is now ——

“Are you kidding me——!?”

“Akitsuki, don’t get angry. What he said wasn’t wrong.”

I couldn’t help but let my emotions get the better of me, and Ms. Hinako quickly spoke out to stop me.

“It’s my fault. That was...my responsibility.”

“Responsibility?”

“I’ve already talked to you before about that child’s past right?”

I remember you said something about how she was always soft and quick to cry.

“He always hated Hikari-chan’s softness... He’s not a very patient person, so his demands from Hikari-chan were quite strict. Although he wouldn’t physically harm Hikari-chan, he would always chide Hikari-chan loudly, especially when it came to her discipline. In fact, what he was doing was right. Everything he said was also undoubtedly right. But...I couldn’t bare seeing that child cry so hard every day.”

“.....”

“Then one day, after I had an argument with that man, I too began to cry just like a child. That became the reason for our divorce. After the divorce, I painstakingly took custody of Hikari-chan. But the days after that happened were truly difficult. Everytime Hikari-chan looked like she wanted to cry, I could only just hold onto her. I had originally planned on steeling myself and be strict on her, but now that I look back on it, I was always pampering her. Even so, raising that child was a very enjoyable experience. I could see a different expression on her face every day. Like — —”

Ms. Hinako suddenly smiled at something.

“Akitsuki, it’s almost time for the Mid-Autumn Festival, isn’t it?”

“Huh? Oh, really...?”

“That’s right. It’ll be on September 25th this year.”

The topic of our conversation was abruptly changed.

So that’s how it is huh, the Mid Autumn is almost here. If I remember correctly, the date changes each year.

“In the past, every year during the time of the Mid Autumn, I would take Hikari-chan to the mountain behind Hyoudou Elementary School to see the moon. We would make some onigiri before we head out, and we would talk about her day as we gazed at the moon. It was on those special days that I would tell her stories from when I was younger. Romance stories and such.”

Ms. Hinako closed her eyes in nostalgia, and softly spoke.

“Although, it often rains during the middle of autumn. There was one time when she was in elementary school that we couldn’t go because of the rain, and all of her hopeful expectations turned into tears. Truly heartbreaking. Ever since then, whenever the Mid Autumn was approaching, she would make a lot of teru teru bozu. The whole house would be filled with teru teru bozu of various expressions. Teehee, I don’t know if that child realized her mistake or not, but she probably confused the mid-autumn festival with Tanabata. She even wrote the paper slips and hang them onto the teru teru bozu, saying something like, **‘If we write our wish now, then the moon will grant them for us! Mommy, you write them too!’** Funny right?”

Oh. So that’s why my room was completely filled with teru teru bozu.

I could faintly imagine what happened. Even if she realized her mistake, she would wrongly respond to her mistake with something like, **“This is Hikari-chan’s version of the mid-autumn festival,”** and then she would continue making a set of teru teru bozu.

“As a result, I wrote, ‘I wish Hikari-chan will always be happy,’ and she immediately said, **‘You have to write something besides my happiness!’** so for the next one I wrote, ‘I wish for a beautiful

flower,’ and then that child bought a beautiful flower for me. I don’t even know where she learned that from. She even said, **‘It’s not like I bought this for Mommy or anything!’** and so I teased her, and asked who she bought it for then. She immediately showed a look of embarrassment on her face. It was so cute. Ever since then, each year before the arrival of the Mid Autumn we would always write our wishes on the teru teru bozu. This has already become a Yumesaki family tradition...”

Having spoke to there, Ms. Hinako dropped her head. Huh?

“I’m sorry, but I’ve gone off topic. It’s just that thinking about how I’ll have to spend this year by myself makes me feel so lonely.”

“Oh. No, this— —”

Even though I quickly tried to come up with some topic to follow up with, I couldn’t think of what to say. Ms. Hinako smiled at my struggling expression.

“I hadn’t seen that child’s father for a while after the divorce...but he came back on the day of the funeral. He berated me quite loudly. At that time, Hikari-chan’s funeral was still being held, and I could barely calm him down. But during the time when he was in the house, he took everything with him. I didn’t want him to take them away, but I couldn’t say anything either. I’m not saying that I acted this way because she may have committed suicide. But even so, I regret it a lot. If I had known that things would turn out this way, I would’ve given everything to you, Akitsuki.”

Ms. Hinako stuck out her tongue, laughing through her lame excuse.

...Don’t laugh.

“Don’t get mad, Akitsuki. He wasn’t wrong. It was my fault for not protecting Hikari-chan, that his actions are justifiable. It was entirely my fault. I...”

.....

“I’m sorry. You’ve come all this way, and I’ve only been talking about such a depressing subject. You’re a very easy person to talk to, Akitsuki.”

“...please, don’t worry about it.”

“Teehee. At times like this, it’s quite hard for me to act calm. Hikari-chan is just like me in this way.”

Ms. Hinako continued to speak with regret.

“That girl was quite popular with the boys, and especially since she treated others nicely, she caused a lot of misunderstandings with boys. After she receives a confession, she would always hide in the corner of a room, and use her finger to fiddle with her hair. Her smiling face would blush red, and she would awkwardly reveal how another boy had confessed to her. Although, she turned down all of the confessions she received.”

Ms. Hinako fiddled with her hair, and then —

“.....”

“.....”

Huh?

“...How lonely.”

.....!

Ms. Hinako drooped her head, and her voice trembled.

“I’ve thought about overcoming this pain. I’ve sorted my emotions out countless times, remembering everyone’s encouragement, I wanted to lift myself up. But the thing is, sometimes — —. As I wash the clothes, I couldn’t help but think, ‘There’s no more rice grains stuck on the skirt,’ and as I cook I can’t stop myself from thinking, ‘I won’t have to force her to eat her vegetables anymore.’ When I think about those kind of things, my spirits immediately plummet, even though I spent so much time organizing my feelings. In fact, every morning when I wake up, I think back to that child...”

.....

“I obviously still can’t forget about Hikari-chan. I can never forget. I truly love Hikari-chan. Even now, even in the future...there will never be anyone who loves her more than me.”

Tears gently welled up in her eyes.

I couldn’t tell if she was crying or not. I also didn’t have the courage to see if she was crying.

“In the past, I always looked forward to gazing at the moon...but I’ve already lost my excitement for this year... All of these past years, there would always be so many, just so many teru teru bozu...but this year, I haven’t seen a single one.”

What should I say? I already knew, but I just couldn’t say anything.

All I could do was tightly grasp my fist, and listen to Ms. Hinako’s crying voice.

“— —.....!”

In that moment, I felt a sudden urge to tell her everything, but in the end, I gave up. That wasn't what Hikari Yumesaki wanted. And with that constraint, I couldn't do anything.

Ms. Hinako was clearly right in front of me, and I could clearly reach out and wipe away her tears.

Yet, I didn't do anything, anything at —

The gray-eye cat ignored the current mood, and meowed.

It was as if he was reproaching the useless me.

After a while, I decided to head home after I saw that Ms. Hinako had calmed down. If I stayed any longer, she would continue to talk about Hikari Yumesaki. The person she needed was clearly not me. For not having realized this much sooner, I couldn't help but feel angry at how dumb I was.

Ms. Hinako repeatedly apologized as she took me to the door. She tried her best to hide her sadness with a smile, and it felt painful to look at her.

"Akitsuki, is it alright if I let my cat stay at your place?"

"Huh? Why?"

"Oh, I might be out of the house for a while..."

Her vague answer made me feel doubtful. Although it was a shame, since my little sister had allergies.

After I told her that, her clear voice replied, "Oh, then it's fine."

"Teehee, you and Hikari-chan are very much alike after all."

“Huh?”

Just as I was about to turn around and leave, she suddenly said that.

“When you were racking your brain outside my house a while ago, you wouldn’t stop fiddling with your hair, and kept walking back and forth, just like Hikari-chan would do. Although there’s one thing that makes you two different — —”

Ms. Hinako’s eyes stared at me through her long eyelashes, with a soft gaze that didn’t fit the summer.

“And that is — —in the end, you can rely on your own strength to walk forward, just like today. Whenever that child comes across an uncomfortable situation, she would become coy and shy. That side of her is similar to mine.”

A sad smile illustrated the pain in her heart.

“If only Hikari-chan was as strong as you are... who knows what would have happened.”

.....

“Just leave it to me.”

“Hmm?”

“I-It’s nothing. Can I come again?”

“Of course you can. You must come visit again. Next time I’ll be better for sure. I’m fine, I’ve already decided to live with what I have left of Hikari-chan...no matter how painful it is...”

“Alright then.”

I strengthened my resolve, and quickly walked on. Knowing that something might break but also not caring, I exerted my strength into my steps, as if even might my heart might break due to my restlessness.

It's a good thing that I came, I thought with honest feelings.

I almost missed the most important piece of information. That the situation actually turned out this way.

That the strong and yet kind Ms. Hinako was actually reduced to such a depressing state.

I really wanted to punch myself for having put Hikari Yumesaki's and Ms. Hinako's problems aside. I have to tell Hikari Yumesaki about this situation right away. I have to save Ms. Hinako as soon as possible, even if I'm earlier by one day —

As soon as I got home, I quickly opened up the notebook.

Then, while I thought back to my conversation with Ms. Hinako, I turned them into words on the notebook paper. So that I could convey Ms. Hinako's grief to Hikari Yumesaki, I wrote down everything that I could remember from the conversation. Although I've suppressed my urges to write many times before, I decided that it wasn't right. I have to tell Hikari Yumesaki, just how much Ms. Hinako is suffering.

At the end, I left these words for Hikari Yumesaki:

"Ms. Hinako has been hurting for all this time. That's why, for Ms. Hinako's sake, you should tell her everything, and use your own voice to cheer her up. If you're still scared, then it's fine if I tell her myself. Anyway, you should tell her how you're still alive. Be brave, ok?"

Hikari Yumesaki will surely understand.

Hikari Yumesaki will definitely feel Ms. Hinako's pain.

I carried this belief with me as I went to sleep early. And then two days later, the reply for me in the notebook...

"I can't, I'm just still scared. Sakamoto, you're being annoying. Didn't I tell you to wait?"

"...Wait?"

In that moment, I felt heat rise through my face.

My hearing dimmed, my vision blurred, and my breathing became erratic, as a strange feeling coursed through me.

A burning anger.

Hikari Yumesaki's time was gradually being reduced, and although I don't want to think about it, but she'll probably have to face the worst possible ending.

If you're going to see her, then go see her now. If you don't visit her while you're still alive, then you'll only regret it in the end. You've already went through it once, so you should understand right? Or do you want to ascend to heaven without being able to say anything to Ms. Hinako when it's too late? Do you want to cut off your mother-daughter relationship like that? I definitely won't allow you to do that.

"...I have to write her something again."

I want to let her go see Ms. Hinako. This was my responsibility. It was my duty as the other half of the body containing her. Even if it'll make her cry, I must do this.

I know, it's hard for you to face Ms. Hinako after entering my body. I can also understand your fear. If it were me, if I had to use a stranger's body to meet my family with, I also wouldn't know what to do. But the thing is, you should have more than enough reasons to visit Ms. Hinako right now, right?

If we suddenly tell her, it may be hard to gain Ms. Hinako's trust. It would be scary if she gets mad at us and asks, "Are you joking?" However, if you were to talk about the things that only you two know about, then it'll be like what Kazeshiro said, and we'll gain Ms. Hinako's trust. This is already no longer only your problem. We can't let Ms. Hinako spend every day in tears.

"Stop complaining, and just go. I absolutely refuse to step back this time. If you don't go, then I won't forgive you."

"....."

Even I think that these words were harsh. What will Hikari Yumesaki think when she sees them. Just thinking about it gave me a heartache. I'm clearly bad at hurting others. Making other people feel pain seems to bring me pain too. I could personally handle any pain, but I can't stand watching someone with a smile suffer. That's why, I don't want to let Ms. Hinako cry anymore.

"Please understand, Hikari Yumesaki. Please just understand..."

On a rainy Sunday. I woke up right before the alarm went off.

“No, I can’t do it, I’m scared.”

“Saying that again...”

You keep saying that you’re scared and you’re scared, but enough is enough!

My patience has a limit too you know. Today’s journal entry didn’t have any random writings or drawings, nor did it have any pranks. All it had were words full of grief written with a ballpoint pen.

“Because... Because...”

“Because what!? Stop looking for excuses!”

Ms. Hinako is probably suffering again today. Knowing this, I can’t spoil Hikari Yumesaki any longer, no matter what kind of an excuse she writes.

““Because my time is running out? Because if my time keeps reducing like this, there will come a day when I will disappear, you know?”

That’s why you should go see Ms. Hinako right now! If you wait until you die, then it’ll be too late!”

Regret is a punishment for not trying.

So right now, even if you’re still scared, you must also gather up your courage.

I’m certain that this is what should be done, and I’m also sure that this was the right thing to do.

However, my thinking was much too shallow.

“What if...what if, after we tell Mama everything— —”

The words that followed dispelled everything I was about to say.

“And I die again... Mama probably won’t be able to bear it.”

“Oh———”

In that moment, I didn’t know what to say.

Hikari Yumesaki may disappear.

Ms. Hinako still hasn’t recovered from the loss of her daughter.

That’s why——I wanted them to see each other again.

To meet before before she disappears.

“When I see her, what should I say? That although I’m still alive, I don’t know when I’ll disappear?”

The next lines left me speechless.

“I also want to see Mama. I also want to hug her tightly, talk to her, and cheer her up! But...but——What should I say to her!?”

I don’t really mind, since I can see Mama before I died, and tell her my goodbyes.

However, Mama probably won’t be able to bear it. Letting her silently watch me die, she definitely can’t take it. Don’t you see how cruel it is? I’m scared, I don’t want to see Mama cry. I’m scared of seeing her in a miserable state. I don’t want to see that happen. I really am scared. So stop forcing me! Forgive me! Why don’t you understand me!?”

Traces of water stains could be seen everywhere on the notebook paper, and I could see that they were tear drops. The paper was wrinkly, and the letters looked messy. Writing this entry must've been quite painful for her. She was pushed into desperation by me, causing her to write these words.

"In fact...what if Mama doesn't believe me? And even if she does believe me, what if she can't accept the new body I'm in?"

"That probably won't happen, Ms. Hinako is not like that — —"

"If that happens, then I won't be able to handle it. I'm begging you, please forgive me. I really am scared. I beg of you."

""

An awful feeling welled up.

Also followed by a nauseous feeling. I need to think of something that would calm me down, and so — —

"YOU IDIOT — — — — —!"

I bellowed out a roar that felt as if it would shatter my organs, and then I finally calmed down.

I banged my head against the table like the piece of trash I was. I was truly pathetic. Way too pathetic. I actually...actually didn't notice this simple detail.

That's right, I had misunderstood.

I had thought that the only person who was hurting was Ms. Hinako who had lost her daughter, and that the only person who was suffering was Ms. Hinako who could never hear Hikari

Yumesaki's voice again. That Hikari Yumesaki, who refused to go visit Ms. Hinako, was only lacking courage.

However, that wasn't it. Although it can be said that Hikari Yumesaki is still alive, her body is no longer the same as before. She can't simply call Ms. Hinako, "Mama."

"I...understand everything...."

I said that for Ms. Hinako's sake, Hikari Yumesaki should go see her. But the thing is, the person who was truly considering how Ms. Hinako felt was not me. This was obvious. Incredibly obvious. Just like how I can't understand Hikari Yumesaki better than Ms. Hinako, I can't understand Ms. Hinako better than Hikari Yumesaki. This was obvious. And yet, yet I—

I tried reading Hikari Yumesaki's journal entry again. But I only read half of it before I gave up.

I'm truly pathetic.

Even though I was supposed to be helping her, I forced her to write down this kind of memo.

Before this, Hikari Yumesaki had never cried when she wrote her journal entries.

Even when she felt bad about her death she didn't act like this.

Even when she was concerned about Kazeshiro's revenge plan she didn't act like this.

Up until now, Hikari Yumesaki has hid her weak side, trying to appear strong. Always showing me a radiant smile. Although it was a clumsy attempt to act brave, she was still trying her best.

But now it's not the same, and this was the first time she appeared so fragile.

The situation before and the situation right now...what was the difference? I already knew.

"It's because I became her enemy."

What kind of a hero was I? Aren't I just like how I was before?

Just a delinquent, one that everyone hates. In the end, if it weren't for Hikari Yumesaki, I was still just a delinquent.

No matter when, Hikari Yumesaki would always have on an annoying smile and an energetic appearance, but the way she is now, she can't even act brave in the journal. I really am —

"...Dammit..."

I tried to hold back my tears.

Raising my head, not letting the tears fall, I couldn't allow myself to cry.

"But, what should I do... I can't do anything..."

In my empty world, I let out a helpless shout. Now is not the time to cry. If even I were to cry, then there would be no one who can stand back up. However, however I —

"Let's unravel the secrets of Sakamoto's body! Next up, for our first topic Hikari here will uncover Sakamoto's secrets step-by-step! Now then, our first question is, "Why doesn't Sakamoto cut his hair!?" The truth is, he really takes note of his fierce appearance!"

Huh?

"Oh, it was the alarm. That scared me for a second there."

The alarm suddenly rang out in the middle of the quiet room. I was petrified for a bit.

That's right, I woke up before the alarm today.

"— — That's why, he wants to grow out his hair so that he can hide his face, but the truth is, he doesn't realize that this only makes him look even scarier~ The way he smiles about his bangs is also scary."

"...Hikari Yumesaki."

Usually, I would quickly turn off the alarm, but today I wanted to hear that idiot's energetic voice for once, and so I let the ring continue.

"Therefore, Sakamoto! Cut your hair! Go get a manlier haircut! Even just once is fine, but I want to experience being a macho man! In fact, honestly speaking, your haircut is gets too hot in this kind of weather!"

Sigh, this was the first time I actually listened to it, and that's how it was. I feel like she's just as cheerful as usual.

"However, Sakamoto's face really suits Hikari-chan's tastes! Hikari-chan also hopes to become this kind of a delinquent! I also want to become an anti-hero who does his work in the dark!"

"...Who are you calling an 'anti-hero'...?"

"And so, lighten up a bit, come on♪Sakamoto, today is another day to greet with excitement! Be sure to do your best for the entire day! Bye bye~☆"

I couldn't help but begin to smirk at the end of the alarm. Hearing it really makes one feel happy, and I felt like I wanted to hear it every morning when I wake up. It looks like it was worth not pressing the stop button. Really not bad.

"....."

"Are you still listening?"

"Huh?"

"....."

"You're probably not listening anymore."

Eh?

What's this? Is there more at the end?

"....."

"After all, this is the impatient Sakamoto we're talking about here... He should've turned it off by now..."

"....."

"If you're going to turn it off, then you better do it now! Hurry up and get out of bed OK~!"

"Alright, he must've turned it off by now."

"Hehe..."

"...now then,"

"Usually I'm too shy to say this, but there's something that I really wanted to tell you."

"Sakamoto"

“ — — Ever since that day, you’ve always been my ideal type.”

“ — — — !”

“Even now. You are my hero who only belongs to me. You better become my support OK? Smooch ”

“Eheheh...”

Beep — —

The alarm ended there.

“ ”

The tears that I had been holding back almost leaked out.

I really regret it, so much that I almost couldn’t handle it. She trusted me that much. I actually let the girl who trusted me that much cry. I actually hurt Hikari Yumesaki.

That’s right, didn’t Ms. Hinako also mention it before? That when Hikari Yumesaki was wandering around the watermelon field, she was tightly hugging the notebook in excitement?

For me, the notebook was a symbol of Hikari Yumesaki, but what about for Hikari Yumesaki herself? I don’t even have to think about it. For Hikari Yumesaki, it was me, it was Akitsuki Sakamoto.

At first, I had wanted Ms. Hinako to become Hikari Yumesaki’s support. I had thought that Ms. Hinako would definitely be better at helping Hikari Yumesaki than me, believing that she would be better at saving Hikari Yumesaki than me. However, it turns out that I was just wasting time on a wild goose chase.

That idiot — — the one person that Hikari Yumesaki relied on was me.

It wasn't her mother, it wasn't Kazeshiro, it wasn't anyone else.

The one hero that she truly relied on, the hero that she hoped would save her, was — —

“AAAAaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh — — — —!”

I clenched my fists and yelled.

My fighting spirit felt like it was burning up.

I suddenly stood up. I can't cry. I casually wiped my eyes, and looked straight ahead.

“I definitely, definitely must think of a plan.”

Just you two wait! No matter what, I'll definitely come to save the both of you!

I came back to the watermelon fields once again in the rain.

My reason? I didn't know either. But doing nothing wouldn't help with the situation. What should I do when I see Ms. Hinako? I hadn't sorted out my thoughts, but maybe things will turn around. That's right, carrying hope — —

“Eh?”

However, after I vigorously pressed the doorbell, there was no answer.

Was she out? The thing is, her bike is still here.

“Whatever, I'll just wait.”

I didn't even know Ms. Hinako's contact information, so I could only wait for her to return at the front entrance — — but after waiting a while, I never did see her figure.

In the end I don't know how long it lasted, but I stiffly waited for Ms. Hinako under the hot and humid weather brought by the rain. I half thought to myself that she might return soon, and I continued waited to the point where I began to feel drowsy. And so, after I kept waiting for a while — —

"Sakamoto?"

".....!"

"Sakamoto!"

"Whaaaaaaaaa!?"

Turning around while shouting, the already half-asleep me was frightened for a moment. W-What!?

"Sakamoto, what are you doing?"

"Oh, K-Kazeshiro... You scared me there for a second."

The guy standing behind me and holding a black umbrella was my handsome rival, Kazeshiro.

"I mean, what are you doing? You look like a ghost."

"I was at the library looking for a clue on how to save Hikari. Right now I'm heading home, and then I saw you so I came to take a look. What are you doing here? If you don't start looking for clues then it'll be too late. You understand right, Sakamoto?"

Probably because he was stressed, but Sakamoto was a bit anxious as he asked. Seeing him like that, it looks like there wasn't anything at the library either.

"I need to talk with Hikari Yumesaki's mother. Since she's not home, I can only wait."

"...Not home?"

The sweltering heat gave me fatigue, so I nonchalantly replied. Hearing my reply, Kazeshiro posed his question in a low voice.

"...She still hasn't returned?"

"Huh? What's wrong? Still?"

"I also came to see Auntie three days ago, thinking that I could come pay my respects."

Huh.

"However, at that time she was not home either — —"

— — — —!

My mind went completely blank.

Three days ago, I remember that I went to see Ms. Hinako four days ago, so it was on the second day.

That day Ms. Hinako was not home, just like how she was not home today.

What happened?

I recalled that tidy living room, how all the memoirs of Hikari Yumesaki were gone, and how empty the room was.

I remembered Ms. Hinako's devastated look, and the situation with Hikari Yumesaki's father. And also,

— — Akitsuki, is it alright if I let my cat stay at your place?

...Oh, I might be out of the house for a while...

"...You gotta be kidding me."

"Eh, Oi! Sakamoto!?"

In a flash, I ran out into the rain.

"Sakamoto! What's wrong!?"

I didn't pay any attention to Kazeshiro who was chasing after me, and I recklessly sprinted under the rain.

I don't even know where Ms. Hinako was. But, if I just stood there and didn't do anything, then my mind couldn't help but think of crazy things.

It's gotta be a joke, it's gotta be a joke. It can't be true!

How could this happen, that person, how could — —

"Excuse me! Now then, pardon me!"

Once I recovered, I held back my tears as I rang the doorbell of a neighbor's house.

The person who came out looked at me with surprise. Ah, I just realized my own appearance.

"Anyway, do you know where the person who owns this watermelon field, Ms. Yumesaki, went?"

I breathlessly yelled in a loud voice. At first, everyone looked at me with suspicion, but they must have noticed from my panicked look

that something was wrong, and so they answered one after the other. However.

“Don’t know.”

“Now that I think about it, I haven’t seen her for the past couple of days.”

“Sorry, but I don’t know either. But you know, she hasn’t been energetic as much lately...”

All of the replies I got made me worry more. Oi oi...

In the end, I respectfully bowed my head towards the lady who looked like she was a college student, and once again headed out into the rain. Dammit, dammit. This was definitely not good. How did the situation turn into this?

“Sakamoto, what’s wrong? Did something happen?”

Chasing me the entire time, Kazeshiro gasped for breath as he asked. I turned around, and caught my breath as I told him.

“...Four days ago, I visited Ms. Hinako, and at that time, she looked like she was had been quite devastated by what happened with Hikari Yumesaki, the room was also cleaned up nice and tidy, and she even wanted me to raise her cat for her. It’s like she’s going to...”

I hesitated for a moment, and tried to take back what I said. But Kazeshiro was a sharp person. He already understood the situation, and he pressed his hand against his forehead as he thought.

“So that’s how it is huh, that’s certainly bad. We don’t even know Auntie’s cell phone number. What should we do? Notify the police?”

“...If we can’t find her before it gets dark, then I guess we’ll go to the police.”

Dammit. If only I could get in touch with Hikari Yumesaki, we could at least ask her for any clues. However, no matter how hard I try, that wasn’t something I could do. No matter how hard I try...

“Sakamoto!”

Kazeshiro shouted towards me as I held my head down.

“Sakamoto, lighten up a bit! Don’t be like that, raise your head!”

“...Yeah, I’m fine.”

“Alright, well let’s first expand our search area. No problem right?”

I vigorously nodded. I mean really, you’re quite worried too. What a reliable bastard.

That’s right, my other half hadn’t revived yet, so I must work hard to make up for it. I must save Ms. Hinako in her place.

I convinced myself in my heart, but bad thoughts continued to fill my head. If my speculations were to come true — —these kind of farfetched thoughts continued to run through my mind. Dammit, what should I do?

“You better be fine, Ms. Hinako.”

That day, we searched all over until it grew dark — —but we still couldn’t find Ms. Hinako. As such, because we weren’t related to her, we couldn’t submit a missing person report to the police. After we talked with the police at the nearby police station about the situation, we went home.

Just where did you go...

That night, with the rain pattering in the midst of darkness, I silently looked at the notebook in front of me.

I have to write, I can't not write.

Should I write that "It might be too late"? Don't screw around, I can't possibly write that kind of thing.

Let's just ask Kazeshiro to look after tomorrow's me for now. Hikari Yumesaki might still remember Ms. Hinako's cell phone number. As such, maybe by the time I wake up again this whole thing will be over. That's why, maybe I shouldn't worry about it, and I only need to write everything down, and everything will be fine if I leave it all to tomorrow's me. But.

"If... If nothing is resolved..."

That idiot probably won't be able to handle it. I need someone to stand by her just in case.

The only people who know that Hikari Yumesaki is still alive are me and Kazeshiro. Kazeshiro should be able to take care of her. So leaving it to Kazeshiro should be for the best. Even for me, the idiot who made Hikari Yumesaki cry, to write in this notebook, wouldn't it be better off just leaving it to Kazeshiro? Furthermore, I couldn't even talk face to face with Hikari Yumesaki, or even hold her hand, so compared with the useless me, Kazeshiro would probably...

— — Teehee, you and Hikari-chan are very much alike after all.

“ — — — — ! ”

Just as I was about to give up, I remembered what Ms. Hinako had said.

— — When you were racking your brain outside my house a while ago, you wouldn't stop fiddling with your hair, and kept walking back and forth,

— — Although, there is one thing that makes you two different,

One thing different.

— — In the end, you can rely on your own strength to walk forward, just like today.

— — If only Hikari-chan was as strong as you are...then who knows would have happened.

Rely on one's own strength — —

“ — — Aaahhhh! ”

I cried out, and grasped the pen.

“Hikari Yumesaki!”

I yelled with all my might, and wrote just as imposing words into the journal.

“I'm really sorry, but I have some bad news to tell you. Ms. Hinako has disappeared. If we still can't find her, I guess my speculations will have come true. I've already told Kazeshiro about this, so you should go ask him for help. I believe that Ms. Hinako is still alive, so go find her!”

That's right.

“Even if you don’t find her, don’t give up. If that happens, then just write about the memories that only you two know into this notebook, showing that you’re still alive, and I’ll definitely save Auntie!”

Didn’t Ms. Hinako say it before, that I had the strength to rely on myself and walk forward?

“You’re worried, hurt, and afraid of revealing everything to Ms. Hinako, and I’m sorry for before, when I didn’t understand your feelings and said some things that I thought was obvious. However, doing nothing and waiting until the end is also unacceptable. It’ll be too late for regrets. That’s why, gather up your courage, ok?”

Hikari Yumesaki also said it before, that I was her only hero.

That’s why I — —

“I really hate that I can’t be by your side. Why are we so far apart? However, it doesn’t matter how far apart we are, I will never leave you behind. So, don’t cry. Don’t cry anymore. I will definitely save you!”

Even if we can never see each other, or talk together, we were still tightly connected.

All we needed was the notebook to convey our thoughts to each other, and all we needed was to open the notebook to share our memories. Because there was no way for us to talk face to face, we had to reveal our true thoughts to each other. All of the embarrassing things that we would rather not say face to face, only the two of us who could never meet had the ability to say those things to each other.

After writing everything down in one breath, I lied down on my bed.

I trusted that my feelings would definitely reach her. Even if my hand can't reach, I could definitely wipe her tears, I firmly believed.

I'm relying on you, tomorrow's me.

Two days later.

They still could not find Ms. Hinako.

According to Kazeshiro's phone call, they apparently searched for the entire day until night, but even so they could not find her.

Although they got Auntie's phone number from Hikari Yumesaki, it appeared that she didn't bring her cell phone with her. It's probably her habit of not using electronics.

Since Hikari Yumesaki still remembered the hiding location for the spare key, they even went inside to look, but it was already clear of signs of life. Not even the cat could be sighted. The situation had taken a turn for the worse. We might even have to expect the worst conclusion.

"Although it's really surprising."

Kazeshiro said from the other side of the phone.

"I had thought that Hikari would be completely lost because of Auntie's situation, but who would've known that she didn't cry even once, and she did her best at searching. Sakamoto, you must've said something to her, right?"

And that's what he says.

"Yeah, probably. Alright, I'll go out and search some more today...do you want to come with?"

"No, we should split up. Call me immediately if you find her."

"Of course," I easily replied as I ended the call and opened the notebook.

"I'm sorry Sakamoto, I'm really sorry for writing those kinds of things. You really are kind huh. Even though I couldn't find Mama, I believe that she's definitely alright."

The notebook contained an entry left behind by yesterday's me, words that came from Hikari Yumesaki herself.

"I'll definitely come clear with Mama. About how I'm already dead, but also alive, maybe even how I'll disappear, I'll tell her everything. Although I'm scared, I don't want things to end this way. I also don't want to give up. Even though I don't know what to do, and I may be a little bit hesitant, it's obvious that I still want to be revived. I want to meet with Mama after I revive. That's why I'll definitely reveal everything to her. I'll definitely revive, I've already made this realization. I don't want to run away anymore. I want to be strong like Sakamoto."

But you know, Sakamoto. If Mama's really in a tough situation, and I'm too late to see her, then I'll have to rely on you at that time. I've already written down the memories that only we share, so I'll have you go see her in my place. I'll leave everything to you. If you act, you'll definitely save Mama. I believe in you."

"Yeah, I'll definitely think up something."

After I muttered those words, I glanced down at the entry below.

“There’s just one thing I want to ask.”

“Huh?”

“Why are you willing to go so far for me?”

“

Why huh.

“Because.”

I hesitated for a moment, but I swallowed it down together with my saliva.

I— —

“Ever since I saw you when we were little, I’ve always wanted to be your hero.”

Today, I searched all over for Ms. Hinako, having never ran through so many places before.

I couldn’t even feel my fatigue anymore.

Countless unpleasant thoughts filled my head, and each time I forcefully suppressed them, and then I continued to search.

That idiot probably understands my loneliness now.

She probably cried several times without me knowing.

We can only meet through the notebook.

I could only stroke the tears stained in the notebook.

We would probably never be able to wipe away each other’s tears either.

However, it's not like we couldn't do anything.

Even if there was no way for us to touch each other, no way for us to talk to each other, and no way for us to meet and laugh together.

I could still stand at the place closest to her.

What does it matter if I can't wipe away her tears.

Even so, I could still provide a handkerchief for her.

I could give the handkerchief to someone who will wipe your tears for me.

If it rains tomorrow, then I'll just prepare an umbrella for you today.

If you plan on running tomorrow, then I'll just do the stretches for you today.

Playing the unseen hero, the unrewarded hero, that much should be enough. For me, this was perfect, and the most fitting for me.

For her, I silently swore an oath to myself in my heart. And that made the rest of the problem easy.

I'll go run everywhere and search, until my whole body is dripping with sweat, I'm covered with dirt, and my eyes are filled with tears.

And then I'll hand my handkerchief to that person, and let him wipe your tears. I'll definitely accomplish it.

— — As I grew more excited, I continued my search until who knows when.

The sun was already setting in the west.

"Huh?"

I was worried that if Ms. Hinako had already come home, I might've missed her, and so I came back to the watermelon field, and saw a car parked there.

"Huh— —?"

I could only see a man standing besides the car.

Could it be— —

I intuitively guessed it.

He was a middle-aged man who had thin, rectangular glasses, and he was wearing a custom-made suit. This bastard— —

After realizing his identity, I broke out into a run, and came up from behind to face him. He was probably shocked by my sudden appearance, as he slightly raised his head to look at me, his eyes full of suspicion. I panted as I came up with a response.

"Are you... Hikari Yumesaki's father?"

".....And you are?"

I impolitely threw out a question first. Of course I would be answered with a question and surprised look.

"I'm... Hikari's friend."

"— —!"

At that moment, the man widened his eyes. I didn't know what the meaning behind this action was, but it didn't matter.

"...Are you looking for Hinako too?"

I silently nodded my head. What I couldn't understand was how the man appeared to be so well-mannered. Having been scrutinized by me, his mood naturally softened.

"...I apologize for that, I had also received the notification from the police yesterday, saying that she disappeared, and so I just came over to look. I've been waiting here ever since I woke up this morning. However, I never did see her. Really now, where could she have gone off to?"

"....."

"It seems like your eyes are telling me, 'it's all your fault.' It would appear that, you know much about my relationship with Hinako, and probably also what happened with Hikari."

Even after having been stared down by me, Hikari Yumesaki's father was not put off the slightest bit, and he saw through my thoughts. Dammit, Ms. Hinako had only said that he was a stern person. Seeing it now, the opposing man had the professional demeanor of a mature adult, but I, the person with the face of a delinquent standing in front of him, didn't show any fear. Compared with him, I was just like a delinquent. I couldn't say a word when faced with the harsh look in the man's eyes, so I could only hang my head down.

In the end, we fell into silence. Then suddenly, an unexpected discourse broke the silence, and Hikari Yumesaki's father opened his mouth to begin.

"You don't have to put up your guard like that. Although I'm not sure how much you know, I'm just here to return the things. However, it looks like no one's home."

As Hikari Yumesaki's father said that, he brought out something from the car, and in his hands was — —

"Ah— —"

That album.

I've seen that white album before. This — —

"So you do know about it. You are Hikari's... Forget it. I don't even have the right to know."

Hikari Yumesaki's father noisily flipped open the album.

And then as he looked through the photos, he asked:

"Hikari...in your opinion, what do you think of that child?"

"Huh?"

Hikari Yumesaki's father threw out a rather rude question. However, it wasn't actually a question.

"That child is a very frail person."

Before I could answer, he just continued talking.

"Not only was she quick to cry but she was also very weak. It didn't matter what it was, she did everything so nonchalantly... Seeing her like that at a young age, I thought, I couldn't let her this way. Even if there are people who will protect her now, when she grows up — —she probably wouldn't be able to survive in this cruel world. That's why I was so strict on her. It didn't matter how much she hated me. I believe that it was the only way to raise a strength in her that wouldn't lose to anyone else's — —"

""

"However, I ended up breaking our family apart. I don't believe that it was the right thing to do anymore. Yet, Hikari is still too cowardly. She's too kind. Kind people are always frail. Frail people...cannot survive in this world."

Once he finished speaking, Hikari Yumesaki's father sighed with face full of regret.

Kind people are always frail... huh.

Hikari Yumesaki really was kind. For Ms. Hinako's sake, even though she wants to see her, she wouldn't dare reveal her name. However.

"I think that Hikari Yumesaki is a very strong person."

His face flushed red with anger, Hikari Yumesaki's father looked this way. I looked straight at him and continued talking.

"The truth is, she does have a frail side to her. Whenever she does anything she never follows any precautions, but the moment she feels frightened by her situation, she'll cry. Sometimes she'll even suffer the anxiety all by herself. But I know how strong she is. No matter how frightening her situation is, for someone she cares about, she'll become stronger than anyone else."

Even if no one else knew, I completely understood just how strong that idiot is.

That's how she was when she was alive, and even now when she was dead.

That idiot— —Hikari Yumesaki acted strong for Misaki.

She would suffer for her favorite underclassman, and acted strong all by herself. She was clearly anxious about the situation with her

time reductions, but for Misaki she would do anything. This was undoubtedly “strength”. In Misaki’s heart, just how much of a reliable person Hikari Yumesaki was to her...I understood.

“Even if she’s frail, there’s nothing to worry about, even if she has a weak side, it’ll be fine if she finds someone to support her. It’s alright if you use your own strength to cover for someone else’s weakness. Hikari Yumesaki’s strength and kindness helped many people. She’s definitely not just a fragile person.”

Kazeshiro is fine, and Misaki is fine too.

All of them were saved by Hikari Yumesaki. It was her that wiped off their tears.

I’m also someone who was saved by her. That’s why I’m trying my best right now.

We are two souls in one body, and Hikari Yumesaki was using her strength to cover for my weakness. So then, covering her weakness was my responsibility. I absolutely need to protect her.

“.....”

“.....”

We entered another moment of silence.

My words were probably a bit out of control. This was only the first time I’ve even met Hikari Yumesaki’s father, and I went ahead and said those kinds of things.

However, it would appear that he did understand what I meant.

“Oh, so that’s how it is.”

“— —Huh?”

I softly replied with that sound, and Hikari Yumesaki's father handed the album over to me.

"Can I rely on you? If you safely find Hinako, I hope that you would give this to her. I'll just give up on seeing her, we would probably end up arguing anyway. I'm truly sorry for putting you in the middle of two adult's quarrel."

As soon as he finished speaking, he turned around without any hesitation and headed back to his car.

— — No no no.

"What's wrong with you!? D-Don't you hate Ms. Hinako!? But then, why are you returning this!?"

Hikari Yumesaki's father started the engine, pulled down the handbrake, and was about to go on his way. I hurriedly threw out a question. The answer I received was just a short sentence.

"I don't think that Hinako is a good mother, but — —"

The words came unhesitatingly through the open car window.

It was just that towards the end his words sounded a bit shaky — —

"I would've never thought that that child could smile so brightly."

" — — — —"

The car rumbled off, quickly disappearing off into the distance.

W-What's wrong with that bastard?

"...I'll just leave it at that."

I opened the album and muttered to myself. What I saw was something that I've seen before, pictures filled with memories. Ms.

Hinako went through them one by one for me, so I was familiar with every photo. These photos were from the time when they went to the aquarium. And these were from the time when they went to the zoo. These are from her elementary school's athletic festival.

All of the pictures shared one thing in common, and that was Hikari Yumesaki's bright smile. If I had to describe it, it would be a smile that couldn't help but make you smile too. Heheh, this picture was taken when they were moon-gazing right? Hikari Yumesaki's mouth was filled with onigiri — —

“.....Huh?”

Wait a second.

What's today's date again? If I remember correctly, it was September 25th. Today should be the Mid Autumn...

— — In the past, every year during the time of the Mid Autumn, I would take Hikari-chan to the mountain behind Hyoudou Elementary School to see the moon.

I remembered what Ms. Hinako said.

“Could it be?”

As soon as the words left my mouth, I began to sprint.

There's no mistake. Didn't Ms. Hinako say it before? She said that she looked forward to it each year. Doesn't mean that she felt fond of it?

Since she was so worried about Ms. Hinako's disappearance, Hikari Yumesaki must've missed this piece of information. If — — If my guess was right, then Ms. Hinako must definitely be there.

"I'm coming... Ms. Hinako!"

I headed towards the setting sun, sprinting with all my might.



When I arrived at the mountain behind the elementary school, I was already completely drenched with sweat. Although this mountain wasn't big, looking for someone who you didn't know where they were was still a very time-consuming task.

While I was trying my best to search, the full moon had already reached above my head.

"...I found her..."

Just as soon as I was about tire out, I finally found Ms. Hinako.

She was only a little bit far off the mountain trail, standing by the overhanging cliff. I watched Ms. Hinako's back as she sat down in that place. In fact, beside her was the little black cat who had followed along.

Ah... I finally found her. That's great... she's still alive — — But just when I was relieved of my worries.

".....What — — —?"

Under the light of the full moon, Ms. Hinako stood up, and walked forward.

Right towards the cliff.

" — — — !"

A feeling of dread blew over me, and I felt as if my blood had stopped flowing.

Right in front my eyes.

Towards the mother of the person most important to me.

Right now, immediately — —

“Don’t do iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiit!”

I couldn’t help but yell at the top of my lungs.

I ignored everything.

I made a beeline for it and ran straight towards her.

“— — Eh?”

I recklessly cried out to Ms. Hinako and I managed to catch her eye, but I was still too far away.

Wait, don’t do it, I begging you.

Don’t worry, you’re mistaken, you’re mistaken.

“MS. HINAKO, I’LL CONFESS EVERYTHING TO YOU! DON’T BE SO QUICK TO LEAVE!!”

I yelled at the top of my lungs, trying to first make her stop.

“Oh, Akitsuki — —”

“Ms. Hinako, I’m begging you, please wait! Don’t die!”

I finally arrived by Ms. Hinako’s side, grabbed ahold of her waist, and shouted through my tears. I didn’t even know what I was saying myself. It was just that, no matter what, I had to be here to stop her. Or else I wouldn’t have the guts to face tomorrow’s me. Even though there was no way for us to see each other...

“You’re mistaken! She’s still alive! That idiot’s still alive! So you don’t have to commit suicide! Please listen to what I have to say!!”

“— — — Hmm?”

I shouted with all of my might, all while terribly sobbing.

My words should have reached through, as Ms. Hinako bent down, looked at my snot-covered face, and then — —

“Akitsuki, what do you mean by suicide? I wasn’t planning on doing that kind of thing.”

“What?”

A sound full of stupidity rang through moon-covered night.

Wait, w-weren’t you just walking towards the cliff — —

“Akitsuki?”

Looking at my stupefied face, Ms. Hinako tilted her head in front of me with her own look of confusion.

Wh-, eh? EEEhh?

“What, b-but you were just walking straight towards the cliff...”

“So what if I was walking there? Am I not allowed to gaze at the brilliant colors from there?”

Oh.

“B-But, there’s never anyone at your house...”

“Ah, didn’t I tell you before? I said that I was going out. Together with this small cat.”

Ms. Hinako hugged her small, black cat, and smiled as she replied.

...You got to be kidding me.

Hold on, hold on, was I the one who made an enormously huge mistake...

“W-Where are you going?”

“Hmm~? Oh... I’ll just tell you then, huhu, but don’t laugh at me okay?”

I bit my lip as I asked, and after Ms. Hinako answered back with a giggle, and opened her purse.

What she took out from inside was...

“A fan?”

Ms. Hinako held out a pink, decorated fan.

“Take a look, take a look, then look at this.”

She even handed something over, and it was an advertisement brochure.

This... Oh, it’s that. I remember that it’s been a real hot topic lately, a picture of the idol group called “Eden.”

“.....”

It can’t be.

“I might have said it before, but I’ve been a fan of them ever since they debuted. This was the first time they came to an open dome. I’ve always been supporting them, and I thought that I couldn’t let this opportunity pass by, and so I went to buy a ticket.”

How could this be.

“I thought, I’m already single right now, so letting loose and having some fun wouldn’t do any harm right? That’s why — —”

T-That’s why?

“That’s why... I went to the stadium dome in Hokkaido! Although it was quite far, it was so much fun~! I also managed to visit a lot of

tourist attractions while I was there☆ Ahh, I even bought so many local souvenirs! Look, this is a “EDEN” T-shirt! How does it look, Akitsuki? Doesn’t it look great? Doesn’t it? Doesn’t it?”

“.....Huh?”

Her face filled with excitement, Ms. Hinako raised up the T-shirt signed with signatures. T-This... hey. T-This... huh?

Ms. Hinako watched the thoroughly confused me with a cute look, “Hmm?” she asked with a sound.

Hold on a minute, hold on a minute, how could this be? You got to be kidding me, this kind of situation...

“I... made a mistake...?”

.....

.....

Ah... Goddammit! I put too much thought into it....

That’s right. I had forgotten an important piece of information. This wasn’t just anyone...this was Hikari Yumesaki’s mother.

“What’s wrong? You’re crying and spaced out, you look quite busy.”

“No... it’s nothing. C-Can I sit beside you?”

“Teehee, you really are a strange child. Go ahead and sit.”

It took a lot of strength for me to sit down next to Ms. Hinako. Sigh... what an ending to these few days of suffering... I mean really now.

“Hey, Akitsuki.”

“What is it?”

My mind was still in shambles when I replied. Seeing me like so, Ms. Hinako couldn't help but Teehee again. She then softly —

“You thought I was going to commit suicide?”

“Um, uh...”

Faced with such a sudden question, I didn't know how to respond. I-I have to skirt around it...

No, I can't. Her eyes have already seen through everything.

Having given up on resisting, I silently nodded my head. Ms. Hinako broke into another giggle.

“It looks like I made you worry, sorry. But, I've said it before right?”

What — — I wordlessly asked.

Her current smile, I will never forget.

“I will continue living with that part of Hikari-chan. No matter how painful it is.”

These words gave my entire heart intense turmoil.

“I'll hide my memories into my heart, no matter how painful it is, I have to take my steps forward.”

.....Ahhh.

I felt thoroughly embarrassed.

How many times was this now? I really am an idiot.

I thought that Ms. Hinako was a weak person on my accord.

It was my own wishful thinking that she needed my help.

I was the one who thought she was depressed, and went on a wild goose chase thinking that she was going to commit suicide. But it turned out to be the complete opposite.

This person was really strong.

The one who needed help, the one who needed to be saved was actually me.

I really am — —

“You know.”

Ms. Hinako broke my train of thought — —

“You said before that, ‘That idiot is still alive.’ ...What do you mean by that?”

“— — — —!”

“Oh, d-did I say that?”

“Mhm, you definitely said it.”

“Y-You must’ve heard wrong...”

“I didn’t hear wrong, you def-i-nite-ly said it.”

Uh...

What should I do? Hikari Yumesaki is determined to say it herself. However, looking at this atmosphere, I can’t run away anymore. I’ve actually ruined everything...

I was going to avoid the topic with silence, but Ms. Hinako wouldn’t buy into it, and she stared at me with a smile on her face. Ahhhh, I can’t take it anymore. Goddammit. Hikari Yumesaki, please forgive me. I’ll treat you to some candy later.

“.....Ah.”

Having lost hope, I made up my mind and stood up.

Although it wasn't how I expected it, but whatever. At least it was going to be said eventually.

“...Ms. Hinako.”

“Hmm?”

“Hikari Yumesaki's soul is in me.”

“———Eh?”

Her strange response to these words probably showed how much she was caught off guard. Ms. Hinako's smile stiffened, and she couldn't say anything. As such, I just continued on.

“It's not a joke. On April 4th, when that idiot died, I traded half of my lifespan, and let her soul reside within this body. Oh, by the way, it would be a mistake to say that she committed suicide. She died in an accident. She caused the accident when she crossed the road without paying attention.”

“...T-Then——”

“It might be a bit of an exaggeration to say that I traded half my lifespan, but the truth is that Hikari Yumesaki and I switch personalities every other day. Our personalities will switch in the early morning, and the personality that gets switched out won't be able to leave behind any memories. That's why I can only use the exchange diary to understand the situation, and to communicate through our entries.”

“E-Eh? Aki...tsuki?”

"The countless visits to the watermelon field wasn't from me, it was from Hikari Yumesaki. She wanted to see you countless times, but in the end she was always one step short, and she just couldn't muster up the courage to make that last step."

"W-Wait, Akitsuki what are you — —"

"Here's the evidence, please look."

Gradually feeling impatient, I restlessly said that as I pulled out from my bookbag that thing.

"Ah..."

A weak voice softly cried out.

This was... one of the hanging teru teru bozu that filled my room.

Two days ago, I had Hikari Yumesaki write down memories that only she and Ms. Hinako would know. The reply she wrote back was, "Let Mama see the teru teru Sakamoto's." Of course, suddenly taking out a teru teru bozu would just confuse anyone, but in reality, all of the answers were written on the paper strips hanging from the teru teru bozu.

"I wish Hikari-chan will always be happy"

"I wish for a beautiful flower"

"I wish I can cook together with Hikari-chan."

"I've always wanted to sleep in a futon together with Hikari-chan."

"I wish that Hikari-chan show off her skills in the cultural festival."

“This— —”

I pulled out a bunch of teru teru bozu’s, and Ms. Hinako couldn’t say anything as she looked up at me.

From Hikari Yumesaki’s birth to her death.

The wishes that Ms. Hinako wrote down on the paper strips, and the memories of Hikari Yumesaki making them come true for her.

This was something that no one else knew, memories that only belonged to them. Definitely never to be forgotten, very important— —

“W-Wait, eh...? W-Why, Akitsuki, this... W-Why would Akitsuki know about these.....?”

Faced with the memoirs that only them two should’ve known, Ms. Hinako was thrown into confusion. I continued talking.

“Moreover, please take a look at this.”

Once I finished speaking, I pulled out our notebook from my bookbag.

In here, Hikari Yumesaki entrusted me with the message that she wanted me to give to Ms. Hinako.

Ms. Hinako couldn’t say a word, and trembled as she shook her head.

I slowly walked to her side, and used both hands to give the notebook over to her.

Under the moonlight.

The dazzling snow-white notebook had Hikari Yumesaki's beautiful handwriting written on it.

These words may be a little bit too short for a reunion between mother and daughter — — However, this was what a loving mother would want to hear the most — —

"I'm home, Mama."

".....How can this be....."

Teardrops leaked down onto the notebook paper.

They gradually seeped through the words.

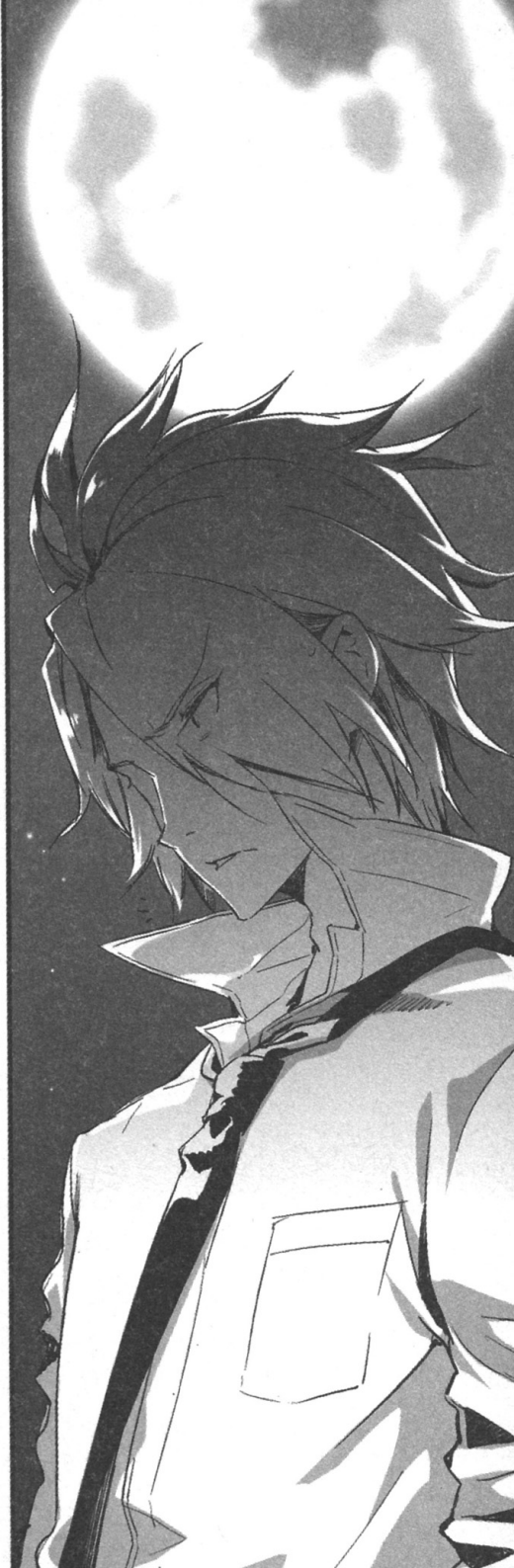
Under the light of the full moon, the falling tear drops glittered brightly.

"Ms. Hinako, maybe you don't believe it, but that idiot became my other half living in this world. At a certain time every early morning, Hikari Yumesaki will replace me and take the stage. That's why... when tomorrow comes, Hikari Yumesaki will revive, and come see you."

Ms. Hinako didn't have a response, probably because she was too choked up to speak.

"...But, Hikari Yumesaki might disappear. Because of this, she still hasn't visited you yet. Because she doesn't want you to get hurt. She's way too kindhearted."

Teardrops stained Ms. Hinako's face. She looked at me, I looked back at her, and I tried my hardest to put on a smile.



“However, I already made a promise, that I would never let Hikari Yumesaki disappear. No matter what I have to do, I will save her. I will definitely save her.”

“Akitsuki... you really are...”

After I finished speaking, I turned my back towards Ms. Hinako and walked a couple of steps towards the full moon, and continued talking as I faced the night sky.

“Ms. Hinako, she’ll definitely come over tomorrow. She’ll definitely return to your side. So, please wait for her. Maybe she still feels scared, and she’ll take some time to come, but please just wait for her. I’ll let you see the mature — — the Hikari Yumesaki who takes steps forward.”

She’ll definitely, definitely come.

Definitely return by your side — —

“.....I’ll be waiting.....”

She looked like she was both smiling and crying.

A voice that was mingled with emotions softly came out from Ms. Hinako’s lips.

“I’ll be waiting... no matter how long it takes... I’ll always be waiting for that child, and when Hikari-chan uses her own strength to come over...”

I gave Ms. Hinako a radiant smile. Please wait, she’ll definitely, definitely return by your side.

“Please, Hikari Yumesaki.”

I took a deep breath, and raised my head to gaze at the night sky.

The day like today which had the entry that I was looking forward to finally arrived. Really, looked forward to.

“Akitsuki.”

Ms. Hinako suddenly shouted towards me.

“You really are a kindhearted child.”

“.....”

“In fact...you’re stronger than anyone else.”

...You’re praising me too much.

“Remember to give some this strength to that child okay, Akitsuki?”

“...W-What are you saying?”

Mama.

Just joking.

I threw away the laughing smile in my heart, and followed the mountain trail down the mountain.

The famous Mid Autumn moon huh. I gazed at the full moon in the night sky, my head muddled with conflicting thoughts.

I’ve always been thanking you, always protecting that mother and daughter. However, from now on — —

“Just leave it to me.”

I’ll definitely protect them.

I’ll definitely make them happy.

I swear on the name of the Autumn Moon — —

Tomorrow, I will die.
You will revive. 2

CUT

いつか、君を抱きしめる。
俺はあきらめない。



CUT 7 – One day, I'll Embrace You. I Won't Give Up

"Sorry. I couldn't bring myself to go after all. Boooh ☆"

"Huh.....?"

Two days later, I find myself speechless once I open the notebook.

Argh...you idiot...I set it up such that it was the perfect scenario with Ms. Hinako's all teary there, and I even said 'I'll leave it to you, Hikari Yumesaki (Cutee)'...

"Y-you gotta...be kidding me..."

I searched through my sister's blog on the phone, and checked on her diary entry yesterday.

She probably wrote something about me yesterday.

Well, that's not it. She's definitely shy about it,

"Big brother went to the watermelon field after school and wandered around over there, waving at a house far away and sending kisses over there before returning home...I don't know what's he doing at all. He's been acting weird recently. When he returned home, he was crouched in a corner of his room, messing with his hair, muttering about something."

"She really can't go in, huh...?"

Enough with that tongue sticking, dammit...

It's near the end of September. Having woken up, I sat dejectedly in front of the notebook.

Reality left me extremely dumbfounded, but I continue to read,

“But it’s not like I can do anything about it! Think about it calmly, if I’m going to shout ‘mama♥’ with such a scary face, mama’s going to feel the difference as compare to Hikari’s cuteness when she was alive, and she’ll faint! I need to think about mama’s feelings here. Hikari’s really magnanimous!”

“What are you yapping about...”

“But but! Our eyes met! I saw mama’s eyes through the window! It’s a great improvement! Level up! Chang changggg♪!! Hey, Sakamoto, I’m really amazing, right?”

So what, you idiot...?

“But mama’s a little frailer than before...uuu...who caused it...sobs sobs (Cutee)”

“Isn’t it you...”

Ah whatever. I completely underestimated Hikari Yumesaki.

She completely ruined all my efforts in an instant again. How long is this parent and child pair going to continue torturing me?

It was two days after I revealed everything to Ms. Hinako.

And after revealing everything, I went over to the police station and settled this matter by apologizing profusely. I then wrote down in the diary that Ms. Hinako’s fine, that I revealed everything to her, that she was waiting for Hikari to return, and then I peacefully waited for this day.

And in the end...are you kidding me...

I continue to read the diary dejectedly.

"But this might be a good thing. One day, when Hikari Yumesaki gets stronger, she'll march forward! Ms. Hinako will surely, surely be waiting for that moment-(CHAARRGEE!!)"

Huh, you're copying me here!? Even I felt embarrassed reading these words again!

"Tl:dr, I got a lot of issues myself~. Hikari's a little depressed, but she's super energetic! Well, you'll think of something in 30 minutes or something. Thank you☆."

"Hey, wait...is she going to end it like this..."

I can't help but let out a sigh, and slump heavily into the chair.

Ahh...looks like I have no choice but to pay a visit to Ms. Hinako today. I wanted to let Hikari Yumesaki hand over the photo album her father had requested to give, but I'm really an idiot. Well, Ms. Hinako will probably laugh and say something like 'I really have to hand it to her'.

Well, in a certain sense, it fits her style. She's idiotic and strong, but she's actually a crybaby, gutless, and still unable to continue forward. Whatever, maybe it doesn't matter. One day, when she gets stronger, Hikari Yumesaki will move forward...

"...Damn it."

I felt unsatisfied, and then, my thoughts paused.

Hm? There seems to be something else written on the diary.

"Anyway, Sakamoto, how did you know Hikari's a sucker for tsunderes?"

What? What are you saying?

“Teehehee. Well, I caused you all sorts of trouble this time! I’ll reward you well!”

So the reward’s the main point here. Hm? Reward? Is she going to send me on another wild goose chase?”

“Switch on the computer now!”

“The computer, huh?”

Looks like she intends to tell me the answer straight away. I got dragged along by her various hints the last time, and then I managed to get a confession out of this super long detour. Looks like it’s something that can be expressed directly this time.

Feeling grouchy, I switch on the computer, and then,

.....
.....

“ARRRGGGHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Once I saw the desktop wallpaper, I screamed.

Wait, wait a sec, wait a second!

Eh, h-how!? I didn’t say anything here!! Why was it revealed!??

“Don’t tell me”

I hurriedly fish out my cellphone, and check through the previous day’s inbox.

Over there was a message Misaki sent to me.

“Hello, Senpai, are you feeling alright? You haven’t been to the shop recently. There’s still excess ice cream. Are you coming? I really miss you ♥”

Hm, whatever. Ever since she showed her true personality, even though she does say that she wants to meet me, it'll just cause me to hate my cute charm as a virgin, but it doesn't matter now. The important thing now is the content of the message.

"Speaking of which, are there any developments between you and the girl you like? You want to pat her head and embrace it real tightly, right? I do remember you saying that the girl always says the word 'virgin', calling you 'Bakatsuki'. Hoho, now I've a slight urge of wanting to be her friend, so introduce her to me next time."

This message was sent to me the previous day.

Do you guys understand what this means?

The me yesterday. The me, yesterday.

Now, let's get back on the prior topic.

First, I look at the desktop background.

The wallpaper shows a certain illustration attached to it.

That's probably a digital illustration drawn using the pen tablet I bought for her some time back, even though I forgot it existed. The most important thing's the content though; there's a savage looking delinquent blushing as he embraced a black haired girl tightly with one hand, the other hand patting the girl's head.

In other words, what exactly does this mean?

It means the identity of the girl I like's revealed...

.....

"AAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!
DAAAAAAAAAAMMMMMMMIIIIITTTT"

Ah! Misaki you idiot! You idiot!

No, it's not actually Misaki's fault here! But, don't say what I said to the 'me yesterday'!

"No no, that's not it! That's not how it is!"

My face's blushing red more than ever, and nothing can be changed now.

On a closer look at the screen, I notice the words Hikari Yumesaki left behind.

"I never thought you would think that way! Ohoho, now I'm really happy! Also, the tissue box's empty here, so don't tell me...kyuu kyu♥."

"That's not it! It's because you used them to make Teru Teru Bozus!"

The severe misunderstanding caused me to growl with a completely beetroot face.

Ahh...I blew it. I wanted to keep it a secret for my entire life...

"...I guess I should continue looking then?"

I pick up the one thing I've been curious with ever since I woke up.

There's a Teru Teru Bozu in the corner of the room, stuffed between the bed and the wall. Its face is exactly the same as the illustration of the pretty girl chibi that often appear in the diary. I stare at this little thing, imagine why Hikari Yumesaki would hide such a thing here, and can't help but feel a little blissful.

The strip of paper hanging on it has the pretty words written on it,

“One day, the two of us will go see mama, right?”

Right, those were the written words,

“...Of course, Hikari Yumesaki.”

I mutter as I stare at my left hand.

On it is the ring that can summon happiness, the one Hikari Yumesaki bought.

After putting that ring on the ring finger, I can't help but blush, and again, I look at the desktop illustration.

The me who's shyly looking away, and the cheerful, grinning girl who's being embraced from behind.

So gentle, so determined, and so cute.

The hand that's patting her head looks bigger by the moment.

One day, surely, one day,

We wished for such a future—

It's a dark rainy morning.

The same kind of sticky annoying rain that happened on the day of her death.

Woken up by the rain, I divert my attention to the cellphone message ringtone that sounded immediately.

It's an anonymous number. 4.59am, the sun has yet to rise.

What's this situation about? Before I can understand, I pressed the button on the cellphone.

"Hello...?"

I let out a voice of one who just woke up.

After a slight delay, what replies me is a clear, nostalgic voice.

"Are you willing to use your entire lifespan..."

"!!"

I immediately understood whose voice that was.

That day.

That time.

That black shadow who forced me to make a choice.

Again, he,

"To let her revive?"

Forces me to make a cruel choice.

"What do you mean...?"

“It’s just as what I implied. To use your death to revive her, or...”

There’s a slight pause, possibly a snicker, and he seems to be enjoying himself as he said that.

“To let her vanish just like that. It’s your choice.”

“What!?”

The phone line’s cut off, and the annoying sweat appears on me.

The large raindrops pelt upon the window along with the strong gusts.

“My entire lifespan...”

I bite my lips as the ominous words vanishes in the midst of the autumn rain.

In the near future,

I would learn of the true meaning behind those words.

Along with the fact that Hikari Yumesaki would disappear.

Afterword

When everyone reads at this afterword, I suppose it would no longer be a problem to say that I am no longer on this world, that I am dead after a flashback to the schedule. Hello everyone, this is Maru Fuji

Now then, it is time for the afterword. I did try fooling everyone by writing a few words of thansgiving in the first volume's afterword, but it will be too stale if I am to follow the same pattern in the second volume.

And so, I seeked the grand master Google on how to write an afterword. It seems that many readers like to read how the making process is done, or any insider information. Thus, this Maru Fuji too will probably follow the trend as well. This is definitely not because I have nothing to write about here.

Anyway, this is the first episode of behind the scenes.

I live in Kansai, and when I have to head to the editorial branch, I will take the Shinkansen. When riding on it, I would naturally encounter foreign tourists here, and it is no surprise that a foreign tourist would be sitting beside me. They however would speak to me in English, and naturally, I do not speak English.

The most memorable moment is probably the Mr Colombia (fake name) I met in late January.

When he started shouting at me "Fuji! Fuji Fuji!" I immediately began to panic (Eh, what!? Does he know about me (Ore)!?) After panicking for a little while, I realize he wanted to know whether to go to the left side seat or the right side seat to see Mt Fuji. Now that really confounded me.

Maru Fuji has no interests in the scenery, and does not know anything about this either. However, I cannot just ignore the the tourists who finally made their way to come visit Japan, and so I bet on a 50-50 chance, and answered energetically 'Right!'.

Mr Columbia said "OK! Nice!" after hearing me say that, and was beaming brightly as he took the 'left-side seat'. Is my English really that bad!? (Tears)

It appeared on the left! That was close! Good thing my English's bad!

The moment I notice Mt Fuji, I just calmed down for some reason, and peeked towards Mr Columbia, who was seated in front of me. I then saw him stare at Mt Fuji blankly, looking extremely interested. The white brother seated beside me frantically fished out the digital camera as he leaned forward to take a photo. As expected of Columbians, they cannot be underestimated.

I kept recalling such trivial matters as I wrote this down, but it certainly is a little that, huh? This really does not involve any behind the scenes. Well, if I have a chance next time, I will try again, so please forgive me, everyone.

This is it for now, so please excuse me now.

Maru Fuji